

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



December 2018

Vol. 123, No. 12

₹ 15.00

# THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

## *Master of One's Inner Domain*

The [Yogi believes in the conquest of [internal] nature. 'How much have you gained towards that? How much control over your senses, over your body?'—that is all the Yogi asks. The Yoga doctrine [teaches that] there is the soul, and inside this soul is all power. It is already there, and if we can master this body, all the power will be unfolded. The Yogi says, religion is practical if you know first why misery exists. All the misery in the world is in the senses. The same fire that cooks your meal burns the child. Is it the fault of the fire? Blessed be the fire! Where can you lay the blame? Not on the elements. Circumstances can never be good or bad. Only the individual man can be good or bad. It is the touch of the senses that cause pleasure and pain, heat and cold. If we can control the senses and order what they shall feel—not let them order us about as they are doing now—if they can obey our commands, become our servants, the problem is solved at once. We are bound by the senses; they play upon us, make fools of us all the time. Here is a bad odour. It will bring me unhappiness as soon as it touches my nose. I am the slave of my nose. If I am not its slave, I do not care. A man curses me. His curses enter my ears and are retained in my mind and body. If I am the master, I shall say, 'Let these things go; they are nothing to me. I am not miserable. I do not bother.' This is the outright,



pure, simple, clear-cut truth. The other problem to be solved is—is it practical? Can man attain to the power of mastery of the body? Yoga says it is practical. What is the difference between men and animals? 'Food and [sleep], procreation of the species, and fear exist in common with the animals. There is one difference: Man can control all these and become God, the master.' Animals cannot do it. Animals can do charitable work. Ants do it. Dogs do it. What is the difference then? Men can be masters of themselves. They can resist the reaction to anything. The animal cannot resist anything. He is held by the string of nature everywhere. That is all the distinction. One is the master of nature, the other the slave of nature. What is nature? The five senses. [The conquest of internal nature] is the only way out, according to Yoga. The day will come when I will be master of myself. If not in this life, [in another life]. I will struggle and never let go. Nothing is lost.

---

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2015), 1.497-501.



**RP-Sanjiv Goenka  
Group**

Growing Legacies



**CESC  
LIMITED**  
Energising Lives - Since 1899



**Vol. 123, No. 12**  
**December 2018**

Managing Editor  
*Swami Muktidananda*

Editor  
*Swami Narasimhananda*

Associate Editor and Design  
*Swami Divyakripananda*

Production Editor  
*Swami Chidekananda*

Cover Design  
*Subhabrata Chandra*

Print Production Coordination  
*Swami Vedavratana*

Internet Edition Coordination  
*Swami Jnanishananda*

Circulation  
*Indrajit Sinha*  
*Tapas Jana*

**EDITORIAL OFFICE**  
Prabuddha Bharata  
Advaita Ashrama  
PO Mayavati, Via Lohaghat  
Dt Champawat · 262 524  
Uttarakhand, India  
Tel: 91 · 96909 98179  
prabuddhabharata@gmail.com  
pb@advaitaashrama.org

Printed and Published by  
*Swami Vibhatmananda*

**PUBLICATION OFFICE**  
Advaita Ashrama  
5 Dehi Entally Road  
Kolkata · 700 014  
West Bengal, India  
Tel: 91 · 33 · 2289 0898  
2284 0210 / 2286 6450 / 6483  
mail@advaitaashrama.org

**INTERNET EDITION**  
www.advaitaashrama.org

# **PRABUDDHA BHARATA**

*or AWAKENED INDIA*

*A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896*



## **Contents**

Traditional Wisdom 775

This Month 776

*Editorial: A Crowd of Fools* 777

Sister Nivedita: 779

A Saga of Dedication and Sacrifice

*Swami Suvirananda*

William Ernest Hocking: 791

A Turnaround Experience

*Somenath Mukherjee*

Wisdom or Eye of Knowledge 799

*Gopal Chandra Bhar*

Balabodha: Atman 814

Traditional Tales: No Recipients of Charity 815

Reviews 817

Manana 819

Reports 821

Cover Image: Dhruvabrata Chakraborty

# Subscribe to Prabuddha Bharata

- Become a Patron Subscriber and support the rich legacy left to all of us by Swami Vivekananda; patrons' names are published in *Prabuddha Bharata*.
- *Prabuddha Bharata* subscribers receive 10% discount on all Advaita Ashrama Publications.
- Send remittances in favour of '*Prabuddha Bharata*' only by bank draft or cheque to Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India.  
Or, **subscribe online** at [www.advaitaashrama.org](http://www.advaitaashrama.org). For bank transfer or other queries, please contact us by email at [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)
- Please note that we do not accept out station cheques.

<b><u>Subscription Rates</u></b>	<b><i>India &amp; Nepal</i></b>	<b><i>Sri Lanka &amp; Bangladesh</i></b>	<b><i>United Kingdom</i></b>	<b><i>Europe</i></b>	<b><i>USA &amp; Canada</i></b>
Annual	₹ 150	₹ 1,100	£ 45	€ 55	\$ 60 (USD)
Three Years	₹ 430	₹ 3,200	£ 130	€ 160	\$ 170 (USD)
Life (20 years)	₹ 2,000	—	—	—	—
Patron (25 years)	₹ 3,000	—	—	—	—

## **Rates for online payment** at [www.advaitaashrama.org](http://www.advaitaashrama.org) (by credit / debit card)

	<b><i>India &amp; Nepal</i></b>	<b><i>Sri Lanka &amp; Bangladesh</i></b>	<b><i>USA, Canada &amp; Europe</i></b>
Annual	(USD) \$ 3	\$ 28	\$ 60
Three Years	(USD) \$ 8	\$ 83	\$ 170
Life (20 years)	(USD) \$ 35	—	—
Patron (25 years)	(USD) \$ 60	—	—

(Rates in foreign currencies depend on current exchange rates and are therefore subject to change without notice)

## **Information for Subscribers**

- Moving to a new address? Please let our Kolkata office know at least a month in advance so that your copy moves too.
- The number on the top line of your address label is your subscription number: please quote this number when writing to us. The month and year on the same line is the last month of your subscription.
- Subscriber copies are dispatched on the first or second day of every month. If you do not receive your copy by the last week of the month, please let us know so that we can send another copy.
- Renew your subscription online through our website.

## **Information for Contributors**

- Unpublished original articles of universal and higher human interests pertaining to religion, spirituality, philosophy, psychology, education, values, and other social topics from competent writers of any country are considered for publication in *Prabuddha Bharata*.
- Articles should not exceed 2,500 words. Paucity of space precludes acceptance of longer articles for

publication, except in rare cases. Articles must be submitted in typed—and preferably electronic—form, with a 250-word abstract of the article.

- For all quotations in articles, adequate references—including name of author, title/publication, publisher with address, year of publication, and page number(s)—should be provided. Internet references should include name of author, website publisher, date, and *full* URL.
- The Editor does not accept responsibility for views expressed in any articles.
- Unsolicited articles are not individually acknowledged. The Editor will contact the contributor if an article is taken up for publication. Email addresses should be furnished where possible.
- The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject, or effect necessary changes in articles on which no correspondence is possible.
- *Prabuddha Bharata* does not undertake to return unsolicited materials.
- Articles published in *Prabuddha Bharata* cannot be reproduced elsewhere without written permission from the Managing Editor.

# You know

how important

**Prabuddha Bharata** is

in spreading the spiritual nectar of the Ramakrishna movement, the invigorating ideas of Vedanta, and the insights of Indian values and culture. *Prabuddha Bharata* also brings you inspirational reading material on a wide variety of topics of global interest.

You value this journal and the cause it represents, and would surely like to share it with others.



*How you can contribute:*

- **Gift** subscriptions to your friends and family, and encourage your thinking friends to subscribe.
- **Sponsor** a subscription for a worthy library or institution known to you, or let us choose one.
- **Contribute** to the **Prabuddha Bharata Permanent Fund** and help ensure the longevity of the journal.
- **Advertise** your company in the *Prabuddha Bharata* and encourage your colleagues to do so.

**PRABUDDHA  
BHARATA**  
or AWAKENED INDIA



**Send to:** Advaita Ashrama  
5 Dehi Entally Road  
Kolkata 700 014

*Yes, I would like to*

- ☐ **Gift** \_\_\_ life subscriptions to *Prabuddha Bharata* at ₹ 2000 each
- ☐ **Sponsor** \_\_\_ libraries and institutions for 20 years at ₹ 2000 each
- ☐ **Donate** ₹ \_\_\_\_\_ to the *Prabuddha Bharata Permanent Fund*

*Amount of ₹ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed herewith by draft / money order*

PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS

*Send my gift subscriptions to:*

**Your Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**PIN** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone No** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of DD** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



SHARE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE !

GIFT

**PRABUDDHA  
BHARATA**  
or AWAKENED INDIA

TO LIBRARIES

**PRABUDDHA BHARATA  
LIBRARY INITIATIVE**

*Let many more benefit from the thought-provoking contents read by you every month in Prabuddha Bharata. Join the Prabuddha Bharata Library Initiative by gifting a life subscription to a library. You can either gift it to the library of your choice or to the library selected by us. Come, sponsor as many libraries as you can and spread the ethos of Indian Culture.*

***Prabuddha Bharata Library Initiative:***

***Name of Sponsor***

254. Rajat Bhattacharya, Karimganj.

***Beneficiary Library***

Karimganj College, Karimganj.

***Prabuddha Bharata Patron Subscribers:***

675. Dr C V S N Rao. Bhubaneshwar.

676. Vivekananda Kendra Granthalalaya, Kanyakumari.

***Send my gift subscriptions to:***

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

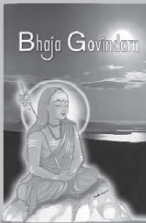
---



**LIFE CARE • 204/1B LINTON STREET, KOLKATA 700014**



## Some of Our Publications...



Pages 42 | Price ₹ 12

### ***Bhaja Govindam***

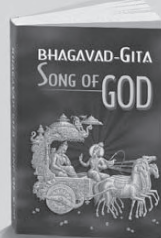
*Translated by Swami Nikhilananda*

This booklet contains Bhaja Govindam, one of the most popular hymns by Sri Shankaracharya highlighting the highest truths of Vedanta, with the text in Devanagari script along with a transliteration in Roman script and a lucid translation in English by Swami Nikhilananda. This booklet will aid readers understand the meaning of this Sanskrit hymn.

### ***Bhagavad Gita The Song of God\****

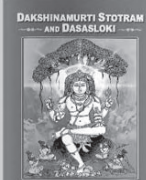
*Swami Prabhavananda*

This book by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood is an interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita, which is an epic poem, an exposition of the Vedanta philosophy, and a gospel of action. In this interpretation, the translators have used the commentaries of Shankara, Sridhara Swami and Madhusudana Sarasvati and also *Essays on the Gita* by Sri Aurobindo. This book serves as a unique reference in the study of Gita.



Pages 344 | Price ₹ 50

\* Available for sale only in India.



Pages 34 | Price ₹ 8

### ***Sri Dakshinamurti Stotram and Dashashloki***

*Swami Gabhirananda*

Sri Shankaracharya's *Dakshinamurtistotram* or Hymn to Dakshinamurti is a poetic masterpiece. In the short compass of ten majestic stanzas, the great world-teacher delineates the fundamental teachings of Vedanta. The *Dashashloki* or Ten verses on the Atman is considered by many in the traditional circles as the last pronouncement of Sri Shankaracharya on the subject to his intimate disciples.

This booklet is a simple translation of *Sri Dakshinamurtistotram* and *Dashashloki* by Swami Gabhirananda. The translation in English will help readers appreciate these poetic masterpieces and also understand the philosophical import it carries.



For copies mail to Publication Department, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai <publication@chennaiamath.org>  
Buy books online at [istore.chennaiamath.org](http://istore.chennaiamath.org) and eBooks at [www.vedantaebooks.org](http://www.vedantaebooks.org)



## When you go the solar energy way, you keep the environment out of harm's way.

Electric or gas geysers hamper the environment, since they involve burning coal or fossil fuels. Plus they add to the expenses of your home. That is why we bring to you Sudarshan Saur solar water heaters! Not only will they help you save on electricity costs, they will also reduce carbon dioxide emissions and lessen global warming. Besides, fossil fuels and other natural resources will be conserved in the process. Hence, they are perfect for your home and a massive step towards a greener planet.



Lifelong service | Suitable for all kinds of water  
Extensive dealer network  
Lakhs of satisfied customers in 25 years  
Awarded by Govt. of India for highest sales

दूर की सोचो



**Sudarshan Saur**  
SOLAR WATER HEATER

Toll Free:  
**1800-233-4545**

Sudarshan Saur Shakti Pvt. Ltd.  
K-240, M.I.D.C. Waluj, Aurangabad - 431 136, Maharashtra, India.  
Toll-free: 1800-233-4545 | [www.sudarshansaur.com](http://www.sudarshansaur.com) | [office@sudarshansaur.com](mailto:office@sudarshansaur.com)



## Dear Prabuddha Bharata Subscribers

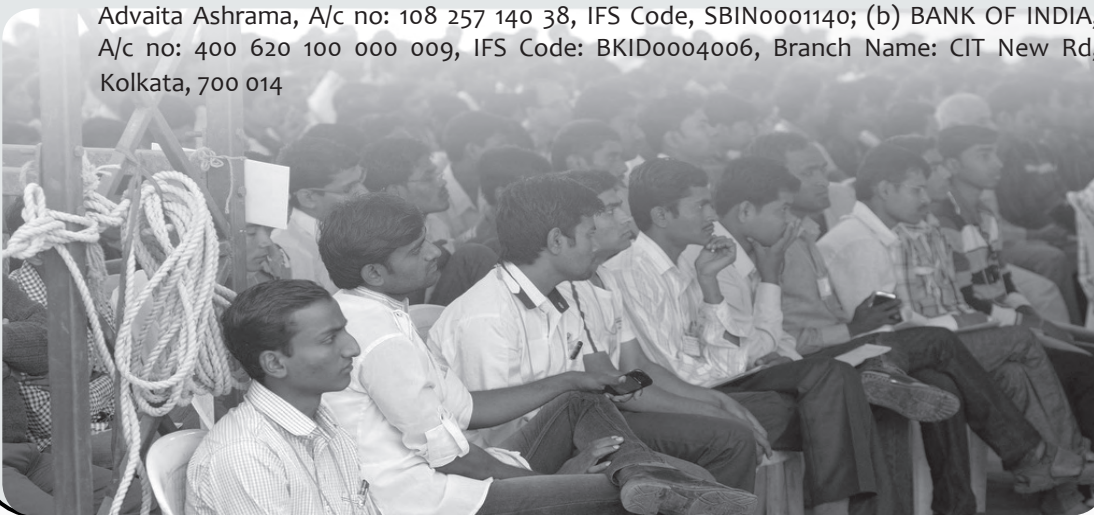
- The Subscribers of Prabuddha Bharata form an extended family. Without your support, Swami Vivekananda's grand vision to spread Advaita Vedanta to the masses would be impossible. At this critical juncture, we request your efforts to bring your relatives and friends into the fold.
- With the January 2019 special issue entitled **Thoughts on Yoga**, our journal **Prabuddha Bharata** will enter its 124th year.
- The **Thoughts on Yoga** number will include inspiring articles written by contributors from various fields.
- You can upgrade your account to **Life** or **Patron** by paying the difference.
- You can also renew your subscription online at [www.advaitaashrama.org](http://www.advaitaashrama.org).
- A gift subscription of **Prabuddha Bharata** is a wonderful way to introduce your near and dear to Indian culture and values. Gift a subscription to your relatives, friends, or colleagues, or sponsor a subscription for the school, college, or university you studied in.

### **Urgent Reminder for our Subscribers**

Dear PB Subscriber,

This year during the months of December and January, many of our subscribers' subscriptions will expire. If your subscription is going to expire during these two months, in order to ensure that you continue to receive *Prabuddha Bharata* and our special January 2019 issue, please renew at the earliest. Please note that we have a simple way to renew online. Simply click on the link <https://shop.advaitaashrama.org/subscribe/> In the alternative, you may pay by:

- Cheque/draft to a Kolkata Bank may please be drawn in favour of:  
ADVAITA ASHRAMA
- Direct Transfer may be done either at: (a) SBI, CIT Rd, Kolkata 700 014, Account Name: Advaita Ashrama, A/c no: 108 257 140 38, IFS Code, SBIN0001140; (b) BANK OF INDIA, A/c no: 400 620 100 000 009, IFS Code: BKID0004006, Branch Name: CIT New Rd, Kolkata, 700 014



# TRADITIONAL WISDOM

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

**Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!**

## Maitrayaniya Upanishad

December 2018

Vol. 123, No. 12

### मैत्रायणीयोपनिषत्

अथान्यत्राप्युक्तं ऊर्ध्वगा नाडी सुषुम्नाख्या प्राणसञ्चारिणी ताल्वन्तर्विच्छन्ना तया प्राणोङ्कारमनो-युक्तयोर्द्धमुत्क्रमेत्  
ताल्वध्यग्रं परिवर्त्य चेन्द्रियाण्यसंयोज्य महिमा महिमानं निरीक्षेत ततो निरात्मकत्वमेति निरात्मकत्वान्न  
सुखदुःखभागभवति केवलत्वं लभता इत्येवं ह्याह ।

परः पूर्वं प्रतिष्ठाप्य निगृहीतानिलं ततः ।

तीर्त्वा पारमपारेण पश्चाद्युज्जीत मूर्ध्नि ॥

॥ ६.२१ ॥

*Athany-atrapy-uktam urdhvaga nadi sushumnakhya pranasancharini talvantar-vichchinna taya  
pranomkara-mano-yukta-yordhvam utkramet talvadhyagram parivartya chendriyany-asamyojya  
mahima mahimanam niriksheta tato niratmakatvam-eti niratmakatvan-na sukha-dubkha-bhag  
bhavati kevalatvam labhata ity-evam hy-aha.*

*Parah purvam pratishthapya nigrihitanilam tatah.*

*Tirtva param aparena pashchad yunjita murdhani.*

(6.21)

And thus it has been said elsewhere: 'The upward leading channel called *sushumna* serves as the passage for breath and is divided within the palate. When it is joined by breath, through it, the syllable Om and by the mind, let one proceed upwards. By causing the tip of the tongue to turn back on the palate, by binding together the senses, let greatness perceive greatness. Thence one goes to selflessness.' On account of selflessness, one is not an experiencer of pleasure and pain. One obtains aloneness. For thus has been said: 'For by the serenity of thought, one destroys deeds, good and evil, with the serene self abiding in the self, one enjoys eternal happiness.'

(6.21)



# THIS MONTH

**W**HAT IS THE PARAMETER of excellence? How do we gauge excellence? Does the popular method of associating excellence with the number of followers or end-users sustain pursuits of excellence? These questions are discussed in **A Crowd of Fools**.

Swami Suvirananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, describes about **Sister Nivedita: A Saga of Dedication and Sacrifice** by detailing her contributions to the education, women, culture, and freedom of India.

Despite his busy and flourishing life as a philosopher and an eminent academician, William Ernest Hocking could never forget his early association with Swami Vivekananda and what he gained from it. Hocking had an uninterrupted link with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement and he wrote the foreword for Swami Nikhilananda's translation of the Bhagavadgita. Hocking entered the Columbus Hall at Chicago's Art Palace on the very day Swamiji was to make his historic appearance at the Parliament. The rest, as is often said, became history. Even though he was in his early youth, Hocking had the mental ability to assess the importance of what he heard. The wholehearted acceptance of this broad world view shaped his life and his tryst with Swamiji had its lasting consequences. Today one marvels in remembering the long past moment when an Indian monk, quite unknowingly, reversed the mindset of a young American boy by his undying words and inspired him to pursue a life of philosophical quest without sacrificing

the spiritual purview. Somenath Mukherjee, a researcher at Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata, traces this history in **William Ernest Hocking: A Turnaround Experience**.

Gopal Chandra Bhar, honorary professor of physics at the Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, and former laser scientist at the Burdwan University discusses about **Wisdom or Eye of Knowledge**.

Many wonderful nuggets of wisdom contained in ancient scriptures are difficult to understand. In *Balabodha*, such ancient wisdom is made easy. This month's topic is **Atman**. Understanding this popular word is necessary to understand its meaning.

It is not enough if we engage in performing good deeds like helping one's country, being honest, being generous, and even leading a spiritual life. It is necessary that we do all these in a spirit of humility and do not get proud. This is explained in the story **No Recipients of Charity**. This story is this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Anmika Kathaigal*.

Keith Oatley, professor emeritus of cognitive psychology at the University of Toronto; a distinguished academic researcher; teacher; prize-winning novelist; regular contributor to *New York Times*, *New Scientist*, *Psychology Today*, and *Scientific American Mind*, and the author of many books including *Such Stuff as Dreams* and *The Passionate Muse*; has written the book **Our Minds, Our Selves**. From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.

# *A Crowd of Fools*

**I**T IS IN THE VERY HUMAN NATURE to strive for excellence. All human pursuits are geared up for attaining excellence. Even an apparently lazy person wants to excel in the pursuit of laziness and goes to great lengths to prove that it is quite possible to live a life without doing any kind of practical work! It is another matter that such a pursuit of excellence in laziness might not be considered exactly as a search for excellence by the majority of the human population. Pursuits of excellence can be various and it is not necessary that all such pursuits are of the same kind or that they bring about good or welfare to society.

It is imperative to gauge any search for excellence. There definitely should be some method for assessing whether excellence has been achieved and if so, to what extent. It is this assessment of excellence that needs looking into. Going by the popular notion, excellence is usually gauged by the number of people, who appreciate what has been done. For instance, if a piece of literature has to be considered excellent, it should have many readers. This is the popular notion. But, is this way of deciding excellence correct? Is it even possible to gauge excellence in this manner? This is a question we need to ask, particularly in the present time, when the Internet and its associated technologies, platforms, and communities are seriously shaping the public discourse about practically everything.

What is excellence? By definition, excellence is that state where an accomplishment attains a level that is unmatched or has few matches in the world. If a person has excelled in music, it would mean that such person can produce different variations

of musical notes in a melody and tempo that has some novelty and takes the listener to newer dimensions of music. That would be excellence in

---

**We humans need to focus on the essence of being humans, beyond the mundane.**

---

music. Now, who can understand this excellence? Of course, only a person who understands the nuances and intricacies of fine variations in musical notes, melody, and tempo. Such a connoisseur need not be oneself adept in producing music, but should have an appreciation of music. And, how many such persons do we usually encounter in our daily lives? Very few, if at all. No wonder then, that classical music forms like Western classical, jazz, Hindustani classical, and Carnatic classical, have less performers and connoisseurs compared to other forms of music like rock, pop, and film music. It would obviously be logical then to conclude that it is difficult to understand finery and excellence in any discipline of human pursuit. However, a change in the basic psyche of the human beings, brought about by various changes in societies across the world, has reduced the emphasis on this obvious conclusion.

We live today in a market-driven economy across the world irrespective of the apparent political or social ideologies that any nation might profess. The customer or the end-user is the ruler. For example, suppose you buy an e-book and start reading it on your e-book reader. You will see that many portions of the text have dotted lines below them with the count of people, who have

emphasised or taken note of that part of the text. Understandably, you would be intrigued to read those words and most likely, emphasise or highlight them. Here, your reading style and thinking has been influenced by what has happened to the readers before you. Your thoughts and perspectives might not have made you focus on those words if you were not induced to do so by a previous emphasis on which you had not control. And for all we know, it could be just a snowballing of the emphasis of a casual or first-time reader, who was the first person to emphasise those words. But now, there would be statistics to prove that those words have been read by millions of people across the world, and suddenly a not so insightful, or maybe even outright meaningless, statement of the author, becomes a legendary fragment of literature! This is the danger of considering numbers to be the only parameter of excellence.

Recent times have seen the proliferation of mediocre or poor quality in works of music, theatre, writing, research, education, leadership, statesmanship, and many other disciplines of human endeavour. This is primarily because of the new-found human obsession with things that go viral. We lose sight of propriety, human welfare, goodness, morality, and all other values that human societies have cherished for long in our race to get more followers or to follow something that is trending. Human history shows that all discoveries, inventions, revolutions, and new ideas had to start a lone journey, be established, and finally get appreciation from human beings. Just because nuclear physics or string theory is not popular does not in any way reduce their importance in achieving newer heights of human excellence.

Any fine human undertaking like the pursuit of philosophy, scientific research, or spiritual life will have very few takers and few followers. But, the very humaneness of the human beings is determined by these pursuits and not by just running

after the primal needs of food, shelter, clothing, and procreation, that human beings share with the other living beings. Just as even if only one good fruit is produced by a tree, it shows the possibility of the tree producing good fruits, similarly even if one sublime or spiritual thought has been produced by the human beings, it shows the possibility that they can produce or conceive of such high thoughts, and such pursuits should continue as long as human beings exist. The obsession with numbers is another manifestation of the obsession with utility. Every thought need not have a practical or utilitarian value. Attaching importance to numbers makes everything in human life bereft of sublimity and love. In the present times, when the pace of technology taking over all analytical human pursuits has reached astronomical levels, we humans need to focus on the essence of being humans, the ability to look beyond the necessary and mundane, towards that which is beyond the existential. Only such a focus can retain the humaneness in the humans, else we would be competing with our own creations, the automatons, and become irrelevant in the process. We should refrain from being passive members of a crowd of fools. We need to create towering personalities that go beyond the grasp of these foolish crowds. We need to set standards that others follow. We need to bring innovations and improve the thresholds of human satisfaction. Being content with the mundane and the existing, the as is and where is, being stuck up in the status quo is only a sign of a closed and degenerating system.

Sheep move in flocks; the lion walks alone. Sheep blindly follow; the lion rules. We should be lions, not sheep. Flies do not select their seat or food and cause diseases; honeybees are very selective and cause pollination, giving us flowers and fruits. Whether we should follow the flies or the honeybees is a decision we need to urgently make with complete wisdom.





# ***Sister Nivedita: A Saga of Dedication and Sacrifice***

**Swami Suvirananda**

**I**T WAS IN NOVEMBER 1895 at the house of Lady Isabella Margesson in England that Sister Nivedita, then known as Margaret Elizabeth Noble, met Swami Vivekananda for the first time.<sup>1</sup> Swamiji came to England after delivering his well-known speeches at the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions in September 1893 and after lecturing across various places in the US.

Lady Isabella had heard about Swamiji, who she learnt, was not merely a powerful orator and an attractive person—he was, in fact, a man who had experienced God! Naturally, she invited Swamiji to her house. She sent an invitation to Margaret Noble too. Why was Margaret invited? It was because, by now Margaret had established herself as an educationist and an intellectual of considerable repute and hence her meeting with Swamiji would have been of value. Nivedita later referred to her meeting with Swamiji as a turning point in her life: 'Suppose He [Swamiji] had not come to London that time! Life would have been like a headless torso.'<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this meeting with Swamiji, changed her life forever. She became an ardent follower of Swamiji and his cause for the rest of her life.

Again, on 11 March 1898, she was present at the inaugural meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission at Star Theatre in Kolkata. The meeting was presided over by Swamiji and Nivedita was



one of the speakers. While introducing Nivedita, Swamiji said: 'Already England had given us some of her great intellects to help us in our Mission. ... And now England has sent us another gift in Miss Margaret Noble, from whom we expect much.'<sup>3</sup>

Nivedita responded to his words thus: 'Yours is the conservatism of a people who have through that long period been able to preserve the greatest spiritual treasures for the World, and it is for this that I have come to India to serve here with our burning passion for service.'<sup>4</sup>

When Nivedita came in touch with Swamiji, storms were raging in the Atlantic and the Pacific as regards the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. It was at this point that Nivedita met Swamiji, who later became the pole star of her life.



Nivedita was a deep thinker regarding various areas of human endeavour, especially education. She had a comprehensive view of what makes true education. She strove to bring art, literature, culture, religion, and science—all within the scope of education. She believed that education was the synthesis of both ‘manifestation’ and ‘growth’. And, this was to take place at the physical, intellectual, and spiritual levels.

For instance, how should the teacher stand in relation to the student? It should be of the nature of mutual respect and acceptance. In this context, an incident that happened in Belur Math might be cited. It was 2 July 1902, two days before the passing of Swamiji. Nivedita had come to Belur Math to see Swamiji. After she had her lunch, Swamiji poured water over her hands to help her wash them. When Nivedita objected to it, Swamiji reminded her of Jesus Christ who washed the feet of his disciples. That made her think of the deeper and penetrating message that Swamiji had quietly pointed out: the gratitude of the disciple is of little importance; it is the teacher who is grateful, for the disciple has given him the opportunity to serve. Thus, in their respective attitudes, the disciple and the teacher both are mutually ‘accepted’. This sense of mutual acceptance and respect became the core of Nivedita’s educational philosophy.

Nivedita was a pioneer of women’s education in India. Of course, she was not the first one to think about this matter. Swamiji had pondered over various aspects of this issue in great depths. Besides, there were other eminent Indian reformers such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Ishvar Chandra Vidyasagar who had thought about it. Then, where was the difference between Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and modern reformers? The schools for women’s education

established by them were aimed at giving rise to a new class—‘new women’. In their misled imagination, they searched for ‘a lioness’ in this new class. Nivedita, on the other hand, was not looking for ‘new women’; she was working to discover the ‘greatest woman’ among the contemporary women. And this she did by starting a girls’ school at Baghbazar in Kolkata—a pioneering institution for Indian women’s education. The school, now named Sister Nivedita Girls’ School, run by the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, is a testimony of her lasting legacy.

The education that Nivedita envisioned to impart, put emphasis on gaining applied knowledge, self-discipline, and self-confidence. Nivedita’s education was the education of self-confidence and character-building. She wanted all women, especially the Indian women, to grow in virtue and strength. Education, according to her, was not limited to parrot-like learning of facts and information—it was aimed at raising woman to her divine status.

As one goes through Nivedita’s writings, lectures, and letters, one finds that she was rooted in the philosophy of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Swamiji once wrote to Nivedita: ‘If there was any truth in Shri Ramakrishna, may He take you into His leading, even as He did me, nay, a thousand times more!’<sup>5</sup> To Nivedita, Swamiji’s message was ‘as cold waters to a thirsty soul’.<sup>6</sup>

Nivedita was an early bird at the dawn of Indian Renaissance of nineteenth and early twentieth century. She intuitively knew that the sun of India’s glorious heritage of truth, purity, and service was rising. She could not be wrong. For, she belonged to the category of the legendary women sages of India—Gargi and Maitreyi.

On 7 June 1896, Swamiji wrote a memorable letter to Nivedita. While this letter reveals Swamiji’s personality, it also expresses his bold conviction about Nivedita who was the ‘veritable

live-wire’ of future India. Swamiji wrote: ‘My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.’<sup>7</sup> He further said in the same letter: ‘It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come’ (ibid.). And then he made the great call: ‘Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call’ (ibid.).

Just as Sri Ramakrishna was unerring in recognising Narendranath, later Swami Vivekananda, as one of the rishis from the celestial realm of *saptarishis*, an incarnation of Shiva, and knew the purpose of his descent, in the same way Swamiji was infallible in his assessment of Nivedita. He recognised in her a potential power to move the world.

Gradually, Nivedita found her ‘guru, Gita, and Ganga’ in Swamiji. She had thought deeply on the mystery of life and all the experiences it gives one; she was looking for a philosophy and a prophet who lived that philosophy, as if a tired bird was in search of a safe haven. At last she found it in the personality and message of her Master, Swamiji. To her, Swamiji was everything. And as she endeavoured to understand India, she discovered that Swamiji’s message was the key to understand India. After all Swamiji was ‘condensed India’.<sup>8</sup> She understood that the ‘sleeping’ India had to be awakened. The Indian masses, particularly Indian women, had to be awakened. The women had to be emancipated or else who would set the process of change rolling? The awakened and enlightened women were the hope of future India.

What was needed was a woman like Nivedita—a veritable ‘lioness’ of ‘Celtic blood’.<sup>9</sup> No wonder Swamiji wrote in a letter to Nivedita on 23



July 1897: 'Lord bless you for your great self-sacrifice for the poor Indians' (7.510). She had decided to give her all to the cause of her Master and it was not hidden from his view. From Almora Swamiji wrote on 25 July 1897 to Marie Halboister: 'Do you know Miss Margaret Noble of Wimbledon? She is working hard for me. Do correspond with her if you can, and you help me a good deal there. Her address is, Brantwood, Worple Road, Wimbledon' (8.413). Swamiji was determined to encourage and help Nivedita in every way.

Again, Swamiji wrote to Nivedita on 29 July 1897: 'Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman—a real lioness—to work for the Indians, women specially' (7.511). In the same letter he wrote: 'India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted' (ibid.). But he cautioned her: 'You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank, and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion. ... Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities. If in spite of all this, you dare venture into the work, you are welcome, a hundred times welcome' (ibid.). Each line of this letter is stamped with Swamiji's foresightedness and immense practicality.

Swamiji, however, also assured her in the following words: 'You must think well before you plunge in; and after work, if you fail in this or get disgusted, on my part I promise you, *I will stand by you unto death* whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or

remain in it. ... I promise you that' (7.511–2). We do not know if in the history of the world such a bold assurance has been given by a guru to his disciple in such absolute, clear terms. It amazes us to note the deep conviction and an absolute faith that Swamiji had in Nivedita. It reminds one of the words of the *Katha Upanishad*: '*Ashcharyo vakta kushalo'sya labdha*; wonderful is the preceptor and equally wonderful is the receptor'.<sup>10</sup> No doubt Swamiji was one such wonderful preceptor and Nivedita was one such disciple. And when such a wonderful coming together of teacher and disciple happened, the result also was wonderful!

When she met the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi for the first time on 17 March 1898, Nivedita was beside herself with joy at the touch of Mother's unearthly love. Nivedita—a pure-hearted, guileless soul—was quick to understand the subtle manifestation of spiritual and pure living. Initiation into brahmacharya vows and being christened as 'Nivedita' further strengthened her spiritual aspiration. She would get up early and meditate, a habit that she kept up all her life. Swami Swarupananda, a disciple of Swamiji, was her mentor in many ways. As she struggled to grasp the details of living in an Indian household, absorbing the Indian attitudes and customs, she found Swarupananda's timely counsels to be of much help.

Nivedita was full of fire of renunciation and deep conviction. Swamiji was the source of her lasting inspiration. She knew that in the sea of life, Swamiji was her ship—and she took refuge in that ship. Swamiji in his prophetic vision saw Margaret Noble as the future all-renouncing 'Nivedita'—one who would give her all for the sake of India. Although Swamiji initiated her into the vows of purity and dedication in 1898, she had given herself up well before she came to India. And after initiating her into the sacred



vows, Swamiji wrote her a letter from San Francisco on 4 March 1900 and addressed her—unlike earlier when he addressed her as Miss Margaret Noble or Margot—as ‘Nivedita’.<sup>11</sup> Obviously Swamiji knew that for ‘Nivedita’ the process of ‘dedication’ was complete.

When Nivedita came to Kolkata, Swamiji had sent her to the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, who lived a rather inaccessible, private life of meditation, prayer, and spiritual ministration. Swamiji sent her to Holy Mother as if an offering. The Mother accepted the offering and

the fruit was the newly initiated Sister Nivedita, who gave herself to the ideal of service and unselfish living. In the days to come, Nivedita came to be addressed as *lokamata*, the mother of people.

The Holy Mother had intense love for Nivedita. Nivedita used to call the Mother 'Holy Mother' or 'Mata Devi'. To Nivedita, the Holy Mother was the veritable representation of Sri Ramakrishna. From Nivedita's letters, one gets a feeling that perhaps Nivedita was the best writer on the personality of the Holy Mother. She once described Mother as 'Sri Ramakrishna's own chalice of His Love for the world'.<sup>12</sup>

Swamiji wrote to Nivedita from Paris on 28 August 1900: 'Dream, dream, only dream! Kill dream by dream! ... When the dream is finished and we have left the stage, we will have a hearty laugh at all this—of this only I am sure.'<sup>13</sup> Unless one 'dreams', one cannot do great work. It is dream that materialises as reality. It is through 'dreaming' that one goes forward. This 'going forward' is not only in this phenomenal world, but also in the world of spirituality. Swamiji wanted Nivedita to dream big. And not only that. 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached' (3,321). That was the eternal call of Swamiji.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the stalks of the *kalmishak*, a water plant, entwine around the main stem. He said: 'When you pull one part of the kalmi creeper, all the branches come toward you.'<sup>14</sup> It was a reference to the fact that people dedicated to the same ideal are deeply associated with each other. Nivedita was one such 'stalk', entwined around the main stem of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

Nivedita was rooted in her search for experiencing the highest truth. A spiritual seeker of high order that she was, she came to India essentially to pursue her spiritual quest. She was a young woman of twenty-eight when she came in

touch with Swamiji. He told her of the infinite reality behind the body and the mind and how one should look for it. That there is an Existence beyond body and mind—the true Self which controls the body and mind—was a new idea to Nivedita and it moved her so much that a whole new line of thinking opened up in her mind.

Just as young Naren did not accept Sri Ramakrishna's words unquestioningly, Margaret too did not accept Swamiji's words without question. She did not blindly follow Swamiji or, for that matter, anyone else she came in touch with. She did not any longer accept the Christian idea of a God in heaven; she wanted to seek the God inherent in all living beings. This meant deification of life—that life was not restricted to temple or church; divinity was present everywhere. She saw in Swamiji's emphasis on renunciation and service the light of whole life getting spiritualised. She later wrote in her introduction to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*: 'To conquer is to renounce'.<sup>15</sup> In other words, one should learn to conquer one's desires.

In Swamiji's lectures, Margaret discovered her way to spiritual life. She had not read the Hindu scriptures but was intuitively aware of the goal they sought to preach. She was keen to practise whatever she learnt from Swamiji. This intense yearning for spiritual living made her great. Her inner fire for high living lit up after she began to associate with Swamiji, his disciples, and the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and no wonder she was overwhelmingly drawn towards developing her spiritual potential.

She had accompanied Swamiji to the famed shrine of the Divine Mother in Kashmir, Kshir Bhavani. Swamiji had some deep mystical experiences there and after he returned to Kolkata, he was full of 'Mother'. This had a deep impact on Nivedita and made her think deeply about the work of Mother Kali. She absorbed the idea of



Kali-worship that Swamiji taught her and became a lifelong worshipper of the goddess.

When Swamiji travelled to the West for the second time, Nivedita accompanied him. While at Ridgely Manor, the country house of Leggetts in the US, Swamiji gave two pieces of gerua cloth, the ochre cloth worn by monks, to Sara Bull and Nivedita. He blessed them both by putting his hands on their heads and said: 'I give you all that Ramakrishna ... gave to me. What came to us from a Woman, I give to you two women. Do what you can with it. ... Women's hands will be the best anyway to hold what came from a Woman—from Mother. ... It is like a release. I have borne it all this time, and now I have given it up.'<sup>16</sup> It was at the Ridgely Manor that Nivedita wrote her outstanding book on the ideal and philosophy of the worship of Kali titled *Kali the Mother*.

Nivedita loved to repeat Mother Kali's name and this gave her a feeling that she was following in the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna. But this did not in any way distance her from her beloved Jesus Christ. In so combining her devotion to two great forms of the ultimate Reality, she brought the ideal of universal religion into her life. As a student of Vedanta, she understood that spiritual consciousness is all-pervasive, and all forms of God are equally adorable and divine. She realised that this inherent divinity is present everywhere, and one can identify and feel one with all, irrespective of religion, country, and language. Nivedita did not give up the faith she was born into, but through her understanding of Vedanta, she practised it with greater devotion and meaning.

She put into practice what Swamiji spoke of the ideal of universal religion. Swamiji said that

*Sister Nivedita along with Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Sara Bull, and Ms. Josephine MacLeod in Kashmir in 1898*



Vedanta helps one to become a better follower of what one is already following. Thus, a Christian becomes a better Christian. Nivedita understood this well and followed a liberal and all-inclusive outlook. When Nivedita visited some places in the US to raise funds for her school, she was asked: 'Have you given up ... [your] Christian religion?'<sup>17</sup> Nivedita firmly replied: 'I am one of *Three Christian* members of the Order of Ramakrishna, now resident in India. The other two are Captain Sevier [of the English army] and his wife' (ibid.).

Swamiji had a definite influence on India's freedom struggle. His 'spiritual daughter', Sister Nivedita, took up this passion of Swamiji for the all-round development of India and would often take part in the meetings organised by young and spirited freedom fighters. No wonder the British detectives would keep an eye on her movements. Some of these sleuths belonged to the higher echelons of society. One of them was Cornelia Sorabji, a prominent socialite in the Anglicised Bengali society. Though she was very eager to socialise with Nivedita, Nivedita knew her intentions and would try to avoid her.

As the days passed, the colonial police levelled many charges against Nivedita. She wrote to the Ratcliffe couple on 30 September 1909: 'I hear that I am down in the annals of the CID as having been the inspirer of *Jugantar*.'<sup>18</sup> Another accusation against her was her complicity in 'robberies' that some of the freedom fighters had committed. She wrote to Ratcliffe on 28 April 1910: 'Grave news was brought to our friend the other evening that I am put down in the accounts of the Unspoken Wisdom Department as absolutely responsible for inspiring—what? The dacoities, if you please! So I am watched' (2.414). Again, she wrote to Ratcliffe on 28 July 1910: 'I think I told you a while ago that Denham—Chief of the Detective (or CID)

Force—was honouring me by the assumption that I was the spring of inspiration behind all the dacoities' (2.446).

Nivedita influenced many leading figures of the national freedom movement. One such was Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. As we know it, Netaji was an inspired person, and had read the works of Swamiji and worked to motivate the Indian youth towards freedom and development.

Nivedita carried Swamiji's message to all the places that she went. After the passing away of Swamiji on 4 July 1902, Nivedita went to places like Baroda, Lahore, Nagpur, and so on. In all her public lectures she would refer the famous statement of Swamiji, 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached'. After returning to Kolkata, she also formed some secret societies to fight the colonial rule in alliance with Aurobindo Ghosh.

Nivedita interacted with Rabindranath Tagore but on certain issues she held to her opinion. She felt her path was different from him. Tagore could not unreservedly accept all the activities and opinions of Nivedita, but he was large-hearted enough to appreciate the greatness of Nivedita's character. In fact, Tagore's analysis and observation of Nivedita are of great value.

In a letter to Tagore, Nivedita wrote that she became acquainted with Jagadish Chandra Bose 'in the end of the year 1898' (1.506). Jagadish Chandra Bose was a gifted scientist whose contribution to plant biology and other fields is well recognised. But when Nivedita met him, he was in dire straits. Nivedita, to whom anything connected to India's growth and glory was dear, was moved to see his condition. She came forward and helped him in various ways including championing the cause of his scientific research.

In fact, she played a pivotal role in the working life of Jagadish Chandra Bose. From her letters, we get many glimpses of her intense yearning to

connect Swamiji and Jagadish Chandra Bose, two great minds, whose coming together was necessary for India's progress. According to Nivedita, the future of India depended on the co-existence of spirituality and science. We also get a vivid picture of her majestic suffering in being drawn into, as it were, the maelstrom of these two fearful torrents.

As she tried to help Jagadish Chandra Bose, Nivedita came face to face with the ugly and dreadful face of the imperial reign. In every step Bose had to face tremendous obstacles from the British bureaucrats as well as bear the brunt of jealousy and hatred from some of the British scientists. He realised what a curse it was to be born in a slave nation and also understood only too well the utter helplessness of the conquered race to rise in revolt. In Nivedita's letters is portrayed the piteous picture of this wounded genius of Jagadish Chandra Bose. Nivedita introduced him to Sara Bull who was the patron-mother of genius. Rich and considerate, this lady's generous hand was always extended towards great personalities and great causes. With her help, Bose would have been specially benefited; her monetary support would be a help in his researches and her influence would greatly aid his fighting the opposing forces. Towards enabling this, Nivedita did something that can only be called a 'noble manipulation'. She wanted to make Bose a son of Sara Bull! Nivedita knew that once Bose is accepted as a son, then the son will be entitled to lay claim to anything that belongs to his mother. Later, he was truly accepted as a son by Sara Bull, who showered on him her generous help in many ways.

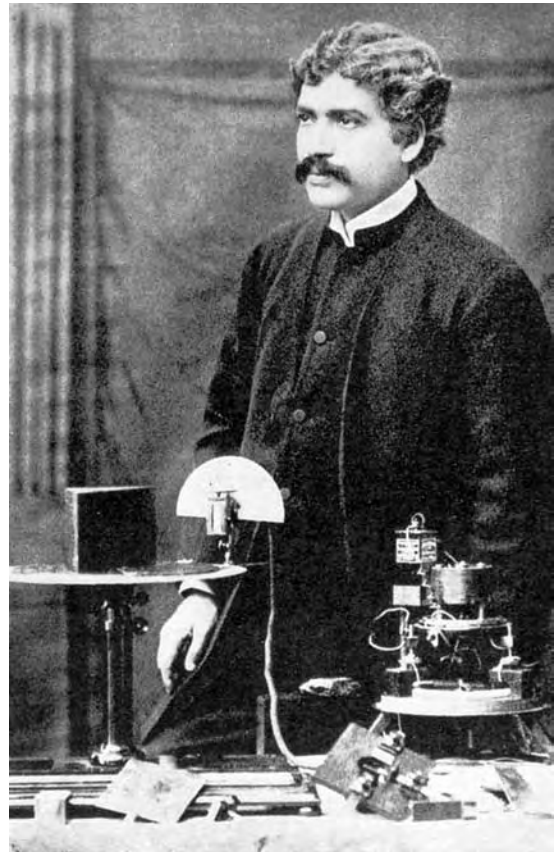
Although Bose did nothing short of worshipping Swamiji, there was also a tendency in him to criticise Swamiji. Swamiji felt proud for Bose and empathised with him after getting to know his struggles. But Swamiji disparaged him for his one-sided view of religion. Their mutual

connection however remained intact till the end.

Swamiji knew that India could rise only if its masses and women were educated, well-fed, and given all that was necessary to make them grow. Without this, the rejuvenation of the nation would be impossible. One's duty lies only in educating the masses and the women. But this far, and no further. For, the onus of resolving all issues would then revolve on the educated masses and women. We should leave the rest to them. How would women lead their lives? Whether there would be any need for child marriage or whether the women, after receiving education, would lead a life of celibacy, and sacrifice their life for the good of many, the resolution of all such questions would depend upon them.

Swamiji deeply pondered over the educational

*Jagadish Chandra Bose (1858–1937)*





ideal for women and was firmly convinced that the future India would outshine the glory of the ancient India. He had similar conviction about women. The women of future India, he would say, would decidedly outdo the achievements of ancient India's women, whose exceedingly noble characters are gloriously engraved on the pages of history. There is an obvious need for scientific and technical education, but it must not be at the cost of sacrificing our timeless spiritual traditions. The education that would enable every woman to manifest in her all the best qualities of the ancient women is the ideal education. The future woman will combine in her the elements of heroic determinism with a mother's heart. Swamiji keenly felt the need for the spread of women's education in India. He was determined to accomplish two things in his life: one was to establish the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, and the other was to establish at least one educational institute for women, if it was not otherwise possible to start a similar Math for women. Therefore, Swamiji was keenly interested in the school that Nivedita had started. For hours, he would discuss about this with Nivedita. Swamiji had many ideas for the uplift of the Indian women and had chosen Nivedita to take a lead in implementing them.

Sister Nivedita wanted to open a school for girls. It was unthinkable in those days to have a school for girls due to social restrictions and rigid customs. But Nivedita went ahead with her plans and on 13 November 1898, the Kali Puja day, the Holy Mother Sarada Devi inaugurated the school by worshipping the photo of Sri Ramakrishna there. As the school was thus blessed with the Holy Mother's presence and worship, there arose in Nivedita's mind Swamiji's call to her to come and work for India.

After Sarasvati Puja in 1902, the girls from Baghbazar area started coming to the school. To

begin with, there was no prescribed set of books then. She followed the kindergarten method, and only oral instructions were given in the class. Besides, sewing, drawing, and games were some of the main components of education. Owing to monetary constraints the school, however, remained closed for a few months. It resumed its functioning from 27 January 1903. Nivedita prepared reports on twenty-eight girls from amongst forty-five girls. She would teach with great earnestness. Her students included Santoshini Datta, Kanta Basu, Bidyutmal Basu, Jnanada Bala, all belonging to junior class. Christina Greenstidel or Sister Christine and Jagadish Chandra Bose's sister used to teach in Nivedita's school. Besides, women devotees of Sri Ramakrishna used to give them spiritual lessons.

The main features of her educational methods were:

1. Emphasis on the manifestation of potential knowledge.
2. Education would be practical, training every student to become independent in all ways.
3. Through training in right action and feeling, the thinking faculty of every student should be encouraged.
4. The student should be gradually taken from the known to the unknown, from the physical to the metaphysical.

In the last phase of her life, Nivedita was sick and came to Darjeeling to recoup her health. A few days before she came to Darjeeling, she translated into English one old Buddhist prayer pertaining to the well-being of the universe. She had a premonition that this prayer was to be her parting message. A few moments before her passing away, that prayer was chanted: 'Let all things that breathe,—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path! In the East and in the West, in the



North, and in the South, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path.’<sup>19</sup>

The prayer was of great solace to her. On Friday, 13 October 1911, it was around seven in the morning. Suddenly Nivedita’s face lit up with a divine light. She feebly uttered: ‘The frail boat is sinking but I shall yet see the sunrise.’<sup>20</sup> She left her mortal coil.

The plaque in front of Nivedita’s birthplace in Ireland reads: ‘Nivedita, an Indian social reformer was born here’. The people, who drafted the plaque, call her ‘Indian social reformer’. Though she was born in Dungannon County in Northern Ireland, her presence is seen today in every nook and corner of India. While we celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth birth

anniversary of Sister Nivedita, let us invoke her presence in the temple of our heart. Let us remember the poem that Swamiji wrote to her in 1900:

The mother’s heart, the hero’s will,  
The sweetness of the southern breeze,  
The sacred charm and strength that dwell  
On Aryan altars, flaming, free;  
All these be yours, and many more  
No ancient soul could dream before—  
Be thou to India’s future son  
The mistress, servant, friend in one.<sup>21</sup>

The transformation of Miss Margaret Elizabeth Noble into Sister Nivedita is one of the memorable sagas of dedication and sacrifice. Born and raised in the material comforts of the West, gifted with many intellectual virtues, Nivedita dedicated her all for the good of India

and especially Indian women. Intensely devoted to the ideal of renunciation and service, she sacrificed herself at the altar of India.

Nivedita lived a brief life of forty-four years. Though she left her physical body more than a century ago, her immortal life and message continue to inspire and motivate countless people in India and outside. Her love for Swamiji and his cause, for India and Indians, and for world peace and fulfilment is unparalleled. India cannot ever forget her. It is a privilege to pay our homage to her on her one hundred and fiftieth birth anniversary. She lives on! Our salutations to that great light!



### Notes and References

1. This is an abridged and edited English translation of the Bengali speech delivered by the author on Youth Conference Day on 9 January 2018 at Ramakrishna Math, Baranagar, Kolkata, a version of which was published in *Information and Activity Report (2017-18)* (Baranagar, Kolkata: Ramakrishna Math, 2018), 7-14.
2. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, ed. Prof. Sankari Prasad Basu, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2017), 1.599.
3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), 3.442.
4. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, 5 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), 2.400.
5. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 5.175.
6. Proverbs 25:25.
7. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 7.501.
8. His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 1.344.
9. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 7.511.
10. *Katha Upanishad*, 1.2.7.
11. See *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 6.428.
12. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, 2.502.
13. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 6.436.
14. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 359.
15. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 1.xv.
16. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, 1.199.
17. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, 4.379.
18. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, 2.302.
19. Mrs J C Bose, 'Appreciations of Sister Nivedita', *Select Essays of Sister Nivedita* (Madras: Ganesh, 1911), 242.
20. Pravrajika Atmaprana, *Sister Nivedita of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1961), 287.
21. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 6.178.

Nivedita's House at 16 Bosepara Lane





# William Ernest Hocking: A Turnaround Experience

Somenath Mukherjee

**H**E WAS YOUNG, absolutely in his formative years, but deep inside was tormented by an inescapable confusion from what he suddenly learnt following an encounter with a remarkable book. Long afterwards, almost at the marginal years of his life, William Ernest Hocking disclosed: '[Herbert] Spencer's "First Principles" had effected an inner revolution in my way of thinking. I was convinced by him; by his arguments for evolution and for a definite rejection of the pretense of belief about things that cannot be known; this new vista was an intellectual victory, but it was somehow a vital injury to think of man as of the animals—birth, growth, mating, death—and nothing more—finis.'<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, Hocking did disclose in his same writing that he was warned by his father beforehand against reading this book which had brought such 'vital injury' to his state of mind.

We may read a livelier description of this predicament in what Hocking wrote elsewhere:

As a good Methodist he [his father] had a shelf of books for 'Sunday Reading'. One of these books was Drummond (Scottish biologist), *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. I got hold of the book as a kid of thirteen; noted the frequent references to a stranger called Herbert



William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966)

Spencer, made up my mind that Spencer would bear being looked into; got his *First Principles* out of the public library and read it with increasing fascination until one day, Father, looking over my shoulder, indicated that the book was unfit to be read by one of my years—would I kindly take it back to the library. As a dutiful son I obeyed. Next day I took it out again, read it by stealth in the haymow over the horses' stall—I being in charge of the stable. Father's fears were correct: Spencer finished me off!<sup>2</sup>

With such turmoil in his young mind, Hocking, just turning twenty, came to visit Chicago for exploring the possibility of getting admission to the newly opened University of Chicago. Interestingly, his sojourn in Chicago coincided with the occasion of the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893. He decided to utilise

the opportunity since, as he writes in the same memoir we read at the outset: 'Christianity was not the only religion. There were to be speakers from other traditions. They might have some insight that would relieve the tension. I would go for an hour and listen.'<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by this aim and a spare hour at hand he entered the Columbus Hall at Chicago's Art Palace on the very day Swami Vivekananda was to make his historic appearance at the Parliament. The rest, as is often said, became history. Referring to Swamiji, Hocking writes in the memoir: 'The speaker came forward with a calm authority but also with a fraternal at-homeness: "Sisters and Brothers of America." In an instant the immense audience was responding with thunderous physical wave of greeting and recognition of the accent of inner assurance' (ibid.). Immediately after these well-defining words on Swamiji's instant impact on those before him at the Columbus Hall, Hocking added something for which posterity will ever be indebted to him: 'He spoke not as arguing from a tradition, or from a book, but as from an experience and certitude of his own' (ibid.).

## 2

From what Hocking wrote, though he told us nothing beyond his attending Swamiji's inaugural address, we can easily guess that he was also present on 19 September 1893 when Swamiji presented his famous 'Paper on Hinduism'. Such a miss is quite expected, for while reminiscing Hocking had to go back seventy years ago. He writes:

I do not recall the steps of his address. But there was a passage toward the end, in which I can still hear the ring of his voice, and feel the silence of the crowd—almost as if shocked. The audience was well mixed, but could be taken as one in assuming that there had been a 'Fall of

man' resulting in a state of 'original sin', such that 'All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God'. But what is the speaker saying? I hear his emphatic rebuke: 'Call men sinners??—It is a SIN to call men sinners!' The way for the essential message was thus perfectly prepared; the main obstacle was identified and attacked with an exact aim and power; through the silence I felt something like a gasp running through the hall as the audience waited for the affirmation which must follow this blow. What his following words were, I cannot recall with the same verbal clarity: they carried the message that in all men there is that divine essence, undivided and eternal: reality is One, and that One, which is Brahman, constitutes the central being of each one of us (59–60).

Before we talk about the exact impact of this utterance on Hocking, as he himself later acknowledged, let us look into what Swamiji precisely said in his lecture—'Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal.'<sup>4</sup> Focusing his attention to this world-moving utterance, Hocking recollects: 'For me, this doctrine was a startling departure from anything which my scientific psychology could then recognise. One must live with these ideas and consider how one's inner experience could entertain them.'<sup>5</sup> And in his continuing lines Hocking came up with something which shall always remain as his everlasting tribute to Swamiji's greatness: 'But what I could feel and understand was that this man was speaking from what he *knew*, not from what he had been told. He was well aware of the books; but he was more

immediately aware of his own experience and his own status in the world; and what he said would have to be taken into account in any final world-view' (ibid.).

In fact, even besides this memoir William Ernest Hocking was seen to have disclosed Swamiji's impact on him in a letter to a close acquaintance who later edited a book on him: 'One incidental feature of the Chicago Fair was the first "Parliament of Religions". I made a great effort to get in for a crowded session at which a Hindu was to speak. I heard Swami Vivekananda, who at the climax of his appeal to think that something of Brahman is in each person called out "Call men sinners! *It is a Sin to call men sinners!*"'<sup>6</sup>

### 3

We may hurriedly shift our attention for a while and look into how Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887–1949), an eminent social scientist, professor, and nationalist, had once evaluated the same speech:

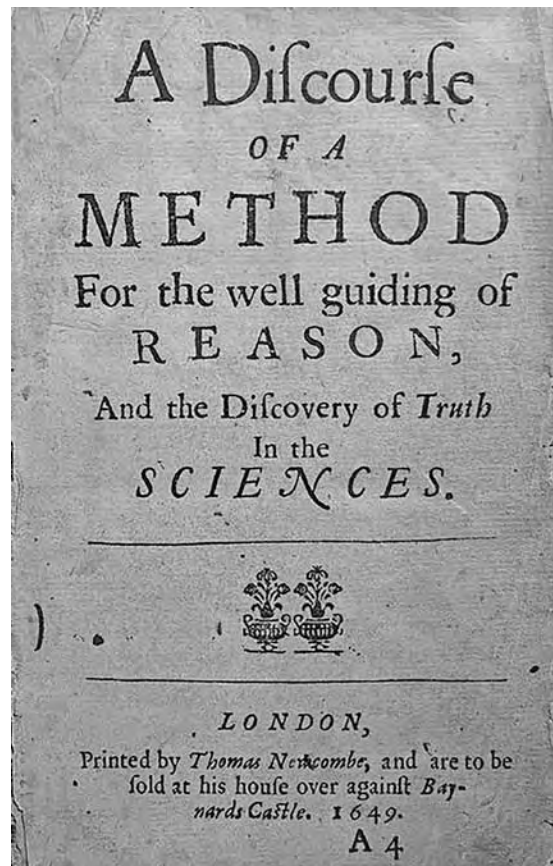
What is the personality that he expressed in this speech? The kernel can be discovered in just five words. With five words he conquered the world, so to say, when he addressed men and women as, 'Ye divinities on earth!—Sinners?' The first four words summoned into being the gospel of joy, hope, virility, energy and freedom for the races of men. And yet with the last word, embodying as it did a sarcastic question, he demolished the whole structure of soul-degenerating, cowardice-promoting, negative, pessimistic thoughts. On the astonished world the little five-word formula fell like a bomb-shell. The first four words he brought from the East, and the last word he brought from the West.<sup>7</sup>

Even though he was in his early youth, Hocking had the mental ability to assess the importance of what he heard; his reminiscences continue: 'I began to realize that Spencer could not be allowed the last word. And furthermore that

this religious experience of mine, which Spencer would dismiss as a psychological flurry, was very akin to the grounds of Vivekananda's own certitude.'<sup>8</sup> The great economic depression of the US in 1893 wiped off the fund Hocking had saved for pursuing his engineering education at the Chicago University. He, instead, went to the Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm in 1894 for a career in engineering. While there, his chance encounter with a book of William James did two things to him. First, he growingly became disenchanted with Herbert Spencer and, second, he felt an urge to move to east to study with William James, who was then attached to the Harvard University.

A Discourse of A Method by René Descartes

First English Edition, 1649.

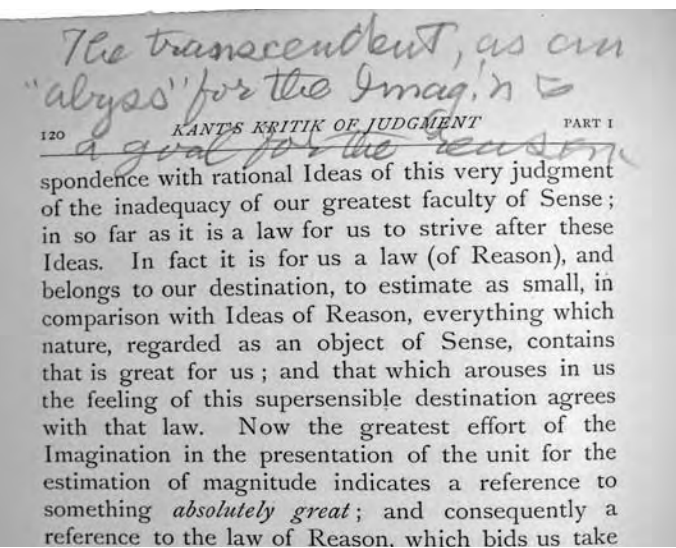




But to pursue this ambition Hocking had to have some money, which he began to earn while staying at Davenport for four years before finally moving to Harvard. But before joining Harvard as a student, he once visited Cambridge, the seat of Harvard University, when, as chance would have it, Swamiji was also staying there as a guest of Mrs Ole Bull at her residence at 168 Brattle Street. And thus, as the adage goes, history repeated itself. This time, while staying at Cambridge, Swamiji had been imparting lectures as well as giving classes in connection with an annual event entitled 'Cambridge Conference', which was held for years together at the said residence of Mrs Ole Bull. In no uncertain words, Hocking recounted his experience:

I spent four years in Davenport, earning money to come East and study with James. During those years, Vivekananda had begun his great work of founding centers for the Vedanta throughout America. In the course of this work he came to Cambridge. I heard him twice: once in a class in metaphysics, and once at the home of Mrs. Ole Bull on Brattle Street. It was in

*Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgment in Hocking's Library*



these informal gatherings that the quality of the man most directly spoke, and I was confirmed in my regard, and my purpose to re-think my philosophical foundations (61).

And such 'rethinking' of his 'philosophical foundations', as was further induced by this second encounter with Swamiji, had left its lasting mark on the course Hocking would follow during the rest of his life. He writes: 'My work with Royce, as well as with James, Palmer, Dickinson, Miller, and others of the great Department at the turn of the century, gave me the mental tools for conceiving a world-unity in terms of spirit, rather than in terms of a redistribution of matter and motion' (ibid.).

But the fact is, though it had been William James, who irresistibly drew Hocking to Harvard, it was Josiah Royce, who later impressed the young aspirant much more. In his essay 'Hocking's Place in American Metaphysics', Andrew J Reck writes: 'If it was James who lured Hocking to study at Harvard in the late 1890's, it was Royce who won his admiration and constant devotion once he arrived there.' The reasons for this shift were purely academic, which we need not discuss here. Instead, we may gain a clearer picture in another writing as to how exactly William James drew Hocking to Harvard:

The most significant event of his days in Ames [the home of Iowa State University] happened by chance one rainy Sunday afternoon. He set out for the library and enquired of the librarian, one Flora Wilson, whether there was anything new in philosophy. Miss Wilson produced *Principles of Psychology* by William James with the comment that it had been well reviewed. Hocking took it to a side table and spent the rest of the afternoon absorbed in it. It was to be the end of Spencer's hold on him (14).

Now we shall see as to how with such wholehearted acceptance of this broad world view

Hocking would finally shape his life, for in pursuing the growing years of his life, though succinctly, we will find that his tryst with Swamiji had its lasting consequences as well.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4

William Ernest Hocking was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on 10 August 1873. His father, William Francis Hocking, had been a homoeopathic physician who, a short time after Hocking's birth, took his family to Joliet, Illinois. It is essentially important that Hocking had his upbringing in Methodism, for this explains his 'injury' in thinking when he read Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*. However, before enrolling himself at the Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm in 1894, he worked as a surveyor, mapmaker, and illustrator. He went to Harvard in the fall of 1899. There he studied under the legends whose names still endure—William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana, George Herbert Palmer, and Hugo Münsterberg and earned his AB in 1901, and AM in 1902.

Between 1902 and 1903 he studied in Germany at Göttingen, Berlin, and Heidelberg before returning to Harvard where he was awarded his PhD in 1904. He remained with the philosophy department at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1906 to 1908. Subsequently Hocking served at the Yale University as an assistant professor of philosophy (1908–14), before returning to Harvard in 1914, and in 1920 became the Alford Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity. He remained at Harvard till 1943, though intermittent assignments took him away, sometimes even for years together. Finally, when he left Harvard, Hocking went to serve as a guest professor consecutively at four places—the University of Leiden in Holland (1947–48), the Goethe Bicentennial in Aspen, Colorado



Prof. Josiah Royce (1855–1916)

(1949), Dartmouth College (1949–50), and, lastly, at Haverford College (1950–1). Hocking gave the Hibbert Lectures at Oxford and Cambridge in 1936, which later were published as *Living Religions and a World Faith* (1940). Later his Gifford Lectures, entitled 'Fact and Destiny', were delivered at the University of Glasgow between 20 April and 20 May 1938, and subsequently in January 1939.

Hocking's key writings include *The Meaning of God in Human Experience: A Philosophic Study of Religion* (1912), *Morale and Its Enemies* (1918), *Human Nature and Its Remaking* (1923), *Man and State* (1926), *Types of Philosophy* (1929), *Thoughts on Life and Death* (1937), *The Lasting Elements of Individualism* (1937), *Science and the Idea of God* (1944), *The Coming World Civilization* (1956), and *The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience* (1957). A *William Ernest Hocking Reader, with Commentary* (2004) was co-edited by John Lachs and D Micah Hester. While assessing the entire writings of William Ernest Hocking, the Lowell Library at the University of Massachusetts drew our attention to the width of his thoughts and contribution: 'His major field



Agnes Boyle O'Reilly Hocking (d. 1955)

of study was the philosophy of religion, but his 22 books included discussions of philosophy and human rights, world politics, freedom of the press, the philosophical psychology of human nature; education; and more. In 1958 he served as president of the Metaphysical Society of America.<sup>11</sup>

To know the person a little more we may briefly look into his family front as well.<sup>12</sup> On 28 June 1905 Hocking married Agnes O'Reilly, third daughter of John Boyle O'Reilly, a poet and leading Catholic layman in Boston. After remaining married for fifty years, Agnes Hocking died in 1955 leaving her husband to live alone for the next eleven years till 14 June 1966. When she lived, she had a marked influence on her husband's career. The couple had their own home in Madison, New Hampshire, and were survived by three children: Richard Hocking, Hester Campbell, and Joan Kracke. Richard later became the chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Emory University. Hocking and his wife Agnes founded the Cooperative Open-Air school in the spring of 1915 at their home in Cambridge. This school eventually became the Shady Hill School in 1916.

Interestingly, while writing this essay I came upon a review in the *New York Times* of 3 November 2016 entitled 'How a Philosophy Professor Found Love in a Hidden Library' that shows how the timeless legacy of William Ernest Hocking revealed itself to the modern thinking world. The review reads thus:

In 2008, a young University of Massachusetts Lowell philosophy professor named John Kaag set out on a fateful road trip. He was driving to Chocorua, N.H., to help organize a conference on William James, who had owned a home in the nearby White Mountains. Stopping for coffee in town, he admitted to a 93-year-old local what he did for a living. This old man had grown up on the estate of another philosophy professor, William Ernest Hocking, a once powerful and wealthy pillar of Harvard in the early 20th century. On Hocking's property still stood his private library, a custom-built free-standing pile. Kaag, invited to look in, instantly recognized the early publications of the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, on whom Kaag had written his doctoral dissertation—books inscribed by Peirce himself. He found William James's reading in preparation for 'The Varieties of Religious Experience', with James's marginalia and annotations. He found signed gift copies from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Robert Frost,<sup>13</sup> which had ended up in Hocking's hands. Then there were the masterpieces of European philosophy since the 17th century: Descartes's 'Discourse on Method' in a first edition; the first English translation of Hobbes's 'De Cive'; and first editions of significant works by Kant. The books were moldering under inches of dust in an unheated, uncooled limbo.<sup>14</sup>

This chance encounter gave way to many irresistible episodes which culminated in what the *UMass Lowell Magazine for Alumni and Friends*, quoting John Kaag, wrote in the winter of 2014:

'These books—and especially the handwritten insights into how the giants of philosophy

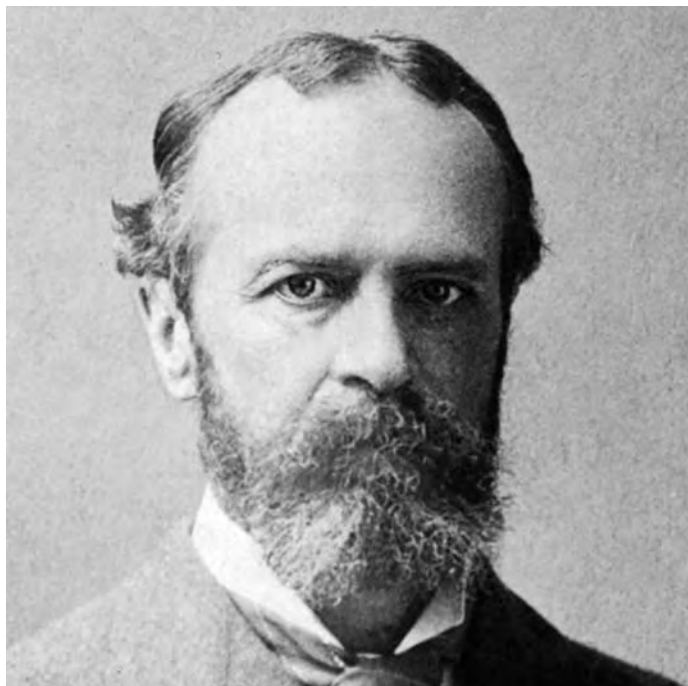


felt about each other's work—are the tip of a very large and complex history', says Kaag, who is in the process of writing about the library in a book called 'Finding West Wind'. Some of the collection will be displayed at a July event at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center marking the 100th anniversary of the death of C.S. Peirce, a founder of the American philosophical tradition. More than 200 scholars from around the world plan to attend. 'This collection will put UMass Lowell on the map in terms of archival research in the humanities', says Mark Reimer, executive director of special initiatives. 'Such editions are housed only at the most prestigious universities—for example, only Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Wellesley and a small handful of other institutions have first editions of Hobbes' "Leviathan".'<sup>15</sup>

Now we may again go back to the reminiscences, which William Ernest Hocking wrote seventy years after he first met Swamiji. When he wrote this memoir, he was living in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, where he owned six hundred and seventy acres of land and grew most of his own food, had his own herd of cattle, and spent most of the day writing. And in this remaining part of his writing we shall learn about his undying admiration for the young Indian monk.

## Epilogue

Despite his busy and flourishing life as a philosopher and an eminent academician, Hocking seemingly never could forget his early association with Swamiji and what he gained from it. He writes: 'These experiences naturally made the idea of a journey to India an attractive dream ... the time came for its unexpected realization ... which took me, 1931 and '32, first to London, where I met Gandhi in connection with the Round Table Conference, and found myself



*Prof. William James (1842–1910)*

in the Calcutta neighborhood, visiting among other places the Belur Math.'<sup>16</sup> While recapitulating his experience at the Belur Math, Hocking became almost poetic: 'It was like returning to the rootage after many excursions in the fruitage. ... and in those sacred precincts my wife and I found ourselves very much at home' (62). In the same memoir, Hocking is explicit about his uninterrupted link with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement: 'The continuing associations with the Vedanta centers near us in America, and specially with Tantine [Josephine MacLeod], while she lived, have helped to keep the memory and the spirit of Swami Vivekananda alive in our own lives' (ibid.).

His close and continuous association with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement betrayed its explicit proof when in 1944 Swami Nikhilananda's translation of the Bhagavadgita was published with a foreword by William Ernest Hocking. Further, what Hocking wrote in his foreword clearly displays his sincerity as well as grasp over the task he had been entrusted to: 'No one who desires to grasp the spirit of religious aspiration of India can afford to remain unacquainted with this, "The Lord's Song". It



Signatures on Books: Hocking and Royce

is, in a sense, the New Testament of Hinduism. It had an important message to a people whose religious ideal tended to be contemplative and mystical, who had the genius to reveal to the world that ultimate goal for thought and reverence sometimes called “The Absolute”, the One without second.<sup>17</sup> And while concluding, his words became a noble prayer: ‘May this majestic poem find its way into the familiar literary friendship of many readers, and contribute to the sense of spiritual kinship with the most gifted people of Asia, akin to us both in blood and in language’ (vi).

Today one marvels in these words not only for the beauty they contain, but, concurrently, in remembering the long past moment when an Indian monk, quite unknowingly, reversed the mindset of a young American boy by his undying words and inspired him to pursue a life of philosophical quest without sacrificing the spiritual purview.



## Notes and References

1. William Ernest Hocking, ‘Recollections of Swami Vivekananda’, *Vedanta and the West*, (163) (September-October 1963), 58–62; 59.
2. *Philosophy, Religion, and The Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of William Ernest Hocking*, ed. Leroy S Rouner (The Hague: Maritinus Nijhoff, 1966), 11.
3. ‘Recollections of Swami Vivekananda’, 59.
4. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 1.11.
5. ‘Recollections of Swami Vivekananda’, 60.
6. *Philosophy, Religion, and The Coming World Civilization*, 14.
7. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, *Sociology of Population* (Calcutta: N M Ray Chowdhury, 1936), 118.
8. ‘Recollections of Swami Vivekananda’, 60.
9. *Philosophy, Religion, and The Coming World Civilization*, 32.
10. Besides what have been specifically referred to here, rest of the information about William Ernest Hocking’s life and activities are culled from the book *Philosophy, Religion, and The Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of William Ernest Hocking*.
11. ‘William Ernest Hocking’, The Hocking Collection, University of Massachusetts Lowell Library <<https://libguides.uml.edu/c.php?g=419903&p=2864122>> accessed 8 November 2018.
12. See *Philosophy, Religion, and The Coming World Civilization*, xiii–iv.
13. The poet Robert Frost had been a close acquaintance, if not friend, of William Ernest Hocking. Proof for this is found in the biography of the former, Henry Hart, *The Life of Robert Frost: A Critical Biography* (West Sussex: John Wiley, 2017); and in the compilation of Frost’s letters, *The Letters of Robert Frost, Volume 2: 1920–1928*, eds Donald Sheehy, Mark Richardson, Robert Bernard Hass, and Henry Atmore (Cambridge: Belknap, Harvard University, 2016).
14. Mark Greif, ‘How a Philosophy Professor Found Love in a Hidden Library—Review of *American Philosophy: A Love Story* by John Kaag’, *The New York Times*, 5 November 2016, accessed 8 November 2018.
15. SE, ‘From Donuts to Descartes’, *UMass Lowell Magazine for Alumni and Friends*, 17/1 (Winter 2014), 7.
16. ‘Recollections of Swami Vivekananda’, 61.
17. William Ernest Hocking, ‘Foreword’, in *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1944), v.



## ***Wisdom or Eye of Knowledge***

**Gopal Chandra Bhar**

### ***Information, Knowledge and Wisdom***

**O**UR AGE IS an age of knowledge with astounding discoveries in diverse areas in science, technology, and humanities. While the horizon of knowledge is widening day by day, the wisdom seems to lag far behind. To acquire knowledge is in our hands, but we cannot acquire wisdom. Wisdom is

the knowledge that makes us happy. But most knowledge is only information, which may have a utilitarian purpose. Such knowledge does not bring a sense of fulfilment. Any amount of knowledge cannot lead to wisdom. One can know or not know something; one can study a thing in depth to know all about it. Such knowledge is an outcome of an action. But, one



cannot become wise by gaining knowledge because, wisdom is a state of being, not the outcome of any action.

Scientific curiosity can lead to increased levels of knowledge and skill, but does not necessarily lead to wiser human beings. Bertrand Russell said in his book *The Impact of Science on Society*: ‘Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.’<sup>1</sup> One may argue that in the 1940s, while there was certainly enthusiasm about scientific knowledge from many top scientists about the discovery of nuclear fission for the testing of the atomic bomb, it was misplaced as far as the wisdom of such testing was concerned. Certain other scientists, who had deep reservations about the implications of these experiments, which subsequently led to disastrous results in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were definitely wiser. In Russell’s dictionary, the wise person is one who makes judicious choices with the goal of society’s welfare in mind. But one must go still one step further. To have wisdom means to have a vision in life and to be able to see beyond the horizon of mere knowledge. Vision with action can change the world. However, vision without action would just be a dream.

One tends to think wisdom can be attained either through collecting as much information as possible or by cramming the mind with knowledge from diverse fields. The acquisition of knowledge requires meaningful information, which a random collection of information is not. Some feel wisdom is a wise use of the knowledge about human values. An unwise use of knowledge makes one a ‘learned fool’. One can read books and gain understanding about the process of enlightenment, but one will still remain in the theoretical domain. Even being knowledgeable about everything cannot make one wise; any amount of knowledge cannot lead to wisdom.

Wisdom is a unique combination of facts and skills acquired by a person through experience and education. Thus with supreme intellect and integral experience one may be able to realise one’s true nature. Sri Ramakrishna often used to say that simple knowing is not enough; one has to assimilate that through hard labour. He illustrated this with the analogy of drinking milk: one does not know milk through reading or hearing about it, nor even by seeing it, but only after drinking it. He called it the feeling in one’s ‘own Pure Consciousness—about the real nature of Brahman.’<sup>2</sup>

Swami Vivekananda was also of the opinion that information from the world outside can only serve as a stimulator. If one is adequately prepared, the information would crystallise from within as knowledge, otherwise the effects of all the information from the environment would be transient and virtually useless. It is the withdrawal of senses leading to introspection that also differentiates one person from another. All other animal species are provided by the almighty with certain characteristics that make one of their sense organs far superior to that of the human beings. But in the humans, all the sense organs are equally strong, providing the capabilities of control and introspection, making the human beings unique in the animal kingdom. So the realisation of one’s true nature depends on how one transforms one’s understanding about oneself with vision and makes use of it, through the sense organs while at the lower plane, and by the eye of knowledge, while at the higher plane. Swamiji rightly said: ‘Knowledge ... is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man “knows”, should, in strict psychological language, be what he “discovers” or “unveils”; what a man learns is really what he “discovers”, by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite

knowledge.<sup>33</sup> This knowledge cannot be acquired just by getting so-called education.

Education should be a process of understanding ourselves primarily and only secondarily as a process to accomplish tasks. This skill of accomplishing tasks is in actual practice that is taught in our widely-used present system of education, which has very little or no emphasis on realising one's true nature. The stages of our learning from childhood start with our parents and environment, culminate with a teacher, and finally with self. Knowledge deals with the matters of the not-Self while wisdom deals with our inherent Self, the Atman. However knowledgeable we are, we are still mired in sorrow. Only the wise enjoy the Atman, *sat-chid-ananda*.

Indian scriptures advise us to go beyond both accomplishing tasks and realise that which leads to tranquility and joy. The scriptures say: '*Sa vidya ya vimuktaye*; real knowledge is that which liberates.'<sup>4</sup> Someone who is knowledgeable is a *vidvan*, while the wise one is a *jnani*, indicating the fact that wisdom is a state of being. But often the changing external conditions impact our wisdom and we may find that our so-called wisdom collapses; but this then cannot be termed as wisdom in the real sense. One must make sure that the wisdom one attains is stable and not affected by the changing external world experiences of sorrow or pleasure. The scriptural term for such a person is *sthithaprajna*, one who is established in the knowledge of one's true nature. The attainment of this state apparently requires the perfect assimilation of both the sensory energy and the psychic energy. Perfect assimilation makes one unperturbed despite changing worldly affairs. By detaching from worldly attractions and repulsions one can make oneself capable of realising a state of higher enjoyments. Even though we cannot perceive this subtle world, it impacts

our lives to a great extent. In order to tune into this world, we need a 'spiritual antenna', that is, our sixth sense needs to be awakened. Our sixth sense grows when we perform spiritual practices. With regular spiritual practices done in accord with the basic principles of spirituality, we can advance our spiritual understanding and become capable to perceive and experience the subtle world in greater degrees.

Information is the basis for knowledge, knowledge is the basis for wisdom, wisdom is the basis for creativity, and creativity is the basis for innovation. More than a century ago, T S Eliot expressed the state of our knowledge: 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?'<sup>5</sup>

A human being requires much upgradation as we are slaves of our genetic system. But the limitations of the human body have indeed opened up new possibilities. We are given freedom to explore this possibility, the reality beyond here and now. With this unique ability, we are even able to explore the unseen realities

T S Eliot (1888–1965)



through consciousness. We are different from all species known to us in the sense that we have more possibilities than any other in the animal kingdom, who have less possibilities due to their physical design. Animals lack this consciousness. Wisdom relates to one's consciousness versus one's unconscious or subconscious. Consciousness is an intrinsic presence and is not located in our brain. Our brain is merely a translation device that is modelled to capture experiences received through the five senses. It then transmits the translated information to one's consciousness, which is the product of our spirit, our inner being. Spirit or soul refers to the same thing. All information stored in the DNA is increased or improved through experiences and carried over to the next body in the next lifetime.

Carl Jung described human beings on the basis of four psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition.<sup>6</sup> But relying on any of these functions separately, seems like the story of several blind men touching different parts of an elephant and drawing different conclusions about the shape of the elephant. Further, the capacities of these different senses vary. In most humans, the sense of sight is primary: most of the information about the world around us is acquired through vision; other sensory organs—hearing, smell, taste, and touch—have successively lower ranges. Our perception of the world is determined by sensory input—the things we experience. Technology can extend, modify, and improve the capabilities of the senses. If humans are sensitive only to certain ranges of stimuli, what consequences or limitations might this have for the acquisition of knowledge? But despite that, our senses do not usually provide us with a complete answer to fundamental issues of life. For example, the senses, lacking memory, cannot distinguish good

from bad; the illusory good may be for the time being only. Simple visual appearance is thus incomplete information.

According to Carl Jung, out of these four functions, people make decisions in life based on two very different sets of criteria, namely, thinking and feeling, which may be referred to as objective and subjective. These two ways of knowing, thinking, and processing information are functions of the analytical or the intuitive mind. When someone makes a decision based on logic and reason, they are in the thinking mode. When someone makes a decision based on their overall holistic picture, or what they believe to be right, they are operating in the feeling mode. Our entire life cannot be wholly governed by either. Some decisions are made entirely by the thinking or the feeling process alone. Most decisions involve some thinking and some feeling. We cannot avoid the influence of the world, but we can free ourselves from the bondage of identification with it. Fantasy is the result of feeling and the intellect working together. Mystical inner experience provides us with the subjective experience while the physical eye provides us with the objective experience. This inner knowledge is called *prajna*. It is hidden in all of us. It can bring great changes in us. It can even alter our personality structure. While awakening of wisdom requires gross purification, subtle purification is required for spiritual attainment, as discussed later.

Those who are deluded because of their hearts being forcibly attracted by the enjoyments of the seen and the unseen objects do not see the true reality. Those others, who have the eye of knowledge, *jnana-chakshuh*, insight of understanding that has arisen from having a clear vision, see the true reality. This is just like a mother's feelings for her child even when the child is beyond her physical vision. It is often said that listening to



one's body signals can help prevent bigger health problems. A skilled medical practitioner, using the 'clinical eye' can diagnose the illness just with a visual observation of the patient, without any detailed examination.

The *Katha Upanishad* compares a human being to a city with eleven gates—one on the top of the head, two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, mouth, navel, urethra, and anus.<sup>7</sup> The one on top of the head is the eye of knowledge or the third eye that leads to inner realms housing myriad dimensions of consciousness. It is the *divya, prajna*, or *jnana chakshu*, through which the sage experiences the supreme vision called *aparoksha-anubhuti*, immediate experience. It is the third spiritual eye of yogis and sages. If our perception has to enhance itself, the most important thing is that our energy has to enhance itself. To open the third eye, one needs to be a regular practitioner of meditation, as it helps us to get a better and in-depth understanding of ourselves. The experience of calmness and peace in meditation enables us to get back in touch with our original nature, which in turn enlightens us as well as others around us. Many of the gods and goddesses are believed to possess this *prajna chakshu*. Shiva has been referred to as *tryambaka*, because he has a third eye. Similarly, Durga has been referred to as *trinayani*, the one with three eyes. The whole process of yoga is to evolve and refine our inbuilt energies in such a way that our perception is enhanced and the third eye opens.

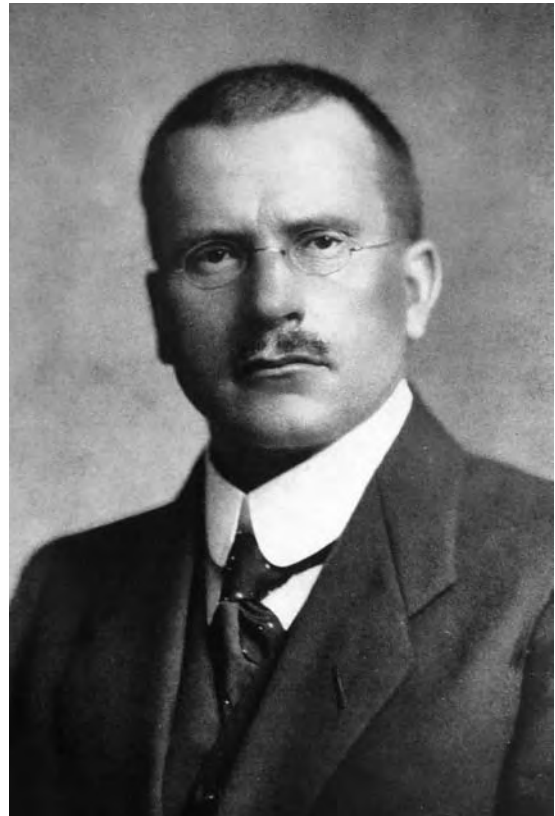
### Some Attributes of Wisdom

Dwelling on the sense objects causes attachment, which leads to craving; craving leads to anger, anger leads to delusion, delusion leads to the loss of memory, the loss of memory leads to the loss of intelligence, which ultimately leads to disintegration.<sup>8</sup> However, if one is able to direct one's

mind away from the sense objects, eventually the person evolves as one established in one's true nature of Brahman, variously called in the scriptures as *sthitaprajna*, *dvandatita*, *dhira*, *viveki*, *gunatita*, or *jivanmukta*. In the Gita, we find that Sri Krishna grants *divya-chakshu*, divine eye, to his matured disciple, Arjuna so that he might see Sri Krishna's omnipresence through the *vishvarupa*, cosmic form, as described in the eleventh chapter of the Gita (11.8). Only a few in millions are fortunate to acquire such a vision. The presence of such persons in any age is the sign that it is possible to acquire such a state.

***Sthitaprajna*** • The first mark of a *sthitaprajna*, one of steady wisdom, is casting off all desires and delighting and being content in one's own true nature, Brahman. This person is always

Carl G Jung (1875–1961)



happy irrespective of the external circumstances. The Gita states that after attaining this state, a person 'is not disturbed even in the face of great sorrow'. This withdrawal of senses is compared to a tortoise retracting its limbs into its shell. The person of wisdom in the same way withdraws one's senses from the worldly sense objects. This person is above all injunctions and prohibitions, above good and evil, virtue and vice, and endowed with an equanimous vision and balanced mind, and does not identify oneself with the body. The mind is neither shaken at the time of misery, nor attached to happiness; it is totally free from desires, fear and anger, neither excited nor disturbed while beholding good or bad. This is a struggle between the lower and the higher, between the animal and the divine in the human.

Attaining this *sthitaprajna* state is the goal of human evolution. If a person is surrounded by inferior instinctive forces, one will struggle provided one has an ideal. The aim is to free oneself from the influence of one's surroundings, hence the struggle for existence. The human being, a superior animal, highest on the evolutionary scale, has two heritages: biological and divine. The desire to escape from danger gave the carnivorous fish wings that enabled them to fly from surroundings. Another illustration is an insect in the presence of a wasp. One should not return hatred for hatred. If one maintains an intense desire for this state with perseverance, effort, and fervour, one can eventually attain it.

**Gunatita** • Everything in this world is associated with the three gunas—sattva, rajas, and tamas—in varying proportions. One who transcends the grip of these gunas is called *gunatita*. This person never identifies with the passing moods of gunas—elation, excitement, and depression—which are the characteristics of the body and the mind. In all disturbances of

the mental and physical environment, this person remains unperturbed, seeing in them only movements of *prakriti*, the primal nature, and not of themselves. A *gunatita* is alike in pleasure and pain, to friend and foe, and never feels oneself as the doer of anything. Only one who serves all with unswerving and exclusive devotion can thus hope to overcome the dominance of the gunas.

**Jivanmukta** • A *jivanmukta* is one who has realised one's true nature, Brahman, and lives in the body but is free from all bonds, sense-cravings, and has a clear understanding of the truth. Such a person has risen above the plane of gains or losses. So long as the effect of actions of such person, done before realising Brahman, produce their effects, the body of the *jivanmukta* remains. It is like a potter's wheel that will stop revolving only when the momentum it has received has worn itself out. The dissolution of the physical frame will take place only when the *prarabdha* karma that has given rise to this body has been exhausted. Even a few words of the *jivanmukta* produce a tremendous impression on the listeners. A *jivanmukta* is not miserable, is not anxious over the past and the future, and remains calm regardless of what is happening in the present. Such a person always remains unattached to the material world due to the awareness that this gross body is perishable, and such a person does not attach any significance to this body and is least interested in names and forms. Being indifferent to the actions and reactions of the senses and the body, a *jivanmukta* is totally bereft of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. A *jivanmukta* does not offend anybody by thought, word, and deed, and is not hurt even a bit by taunts, censures, insults, and persecutions. Such a person maintains balance or equanimity of mind amidst the duality of world: censure and praise, honour and dishonour, pleasure and pain. A *jivanmukta* is

above good and evil, virtue and vice, and finds no fault with others. Such a person is a powerhouse of spiritual energy, who sees all these through the eye of knowledge.

**Dvantatita** • Every experience in the world is a mix of good and bad. Some see social violence and terrorism as freedom struggle. Any enjoyment in our life is associated with long-term misery. All perception of duality in the world is due to the body, the mind, and the intellect. Humans suffer because they are trapped by their *upadhis*, limiting adjuncts, of the body, mind, and intellect. A human being possesses infinite possibilities, though the infinite seems to be ensnared by the finite body and mind. So, the key attribute is to rise above likes and dislikes. Though a person's spiritual awareness is covered by a thick veil of ignorance and makes the person a slave of endless desires and passions, the inherent nature of infinite Brahman does create a fascination in the form of an inward pull. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'Brahman weeps, ensnared in the meshes of maya.' Under conditional bias and inbuilt prejudice along with worldly temptations, our knowledge cannot freely manifest. We attain bliss when the individual will is removed. It is the limited individual perception that divides the experience into joy and sorrow. It is wrong to say somebody is imparting happiness or sorrow to us. Our defective understanding is responsible for our joy or unhappiness.

Gross intellect discriminates between the pairs of opposites: hot and cold, brightness and darkness, rich and poor, wise and ignorant; the corresponding entities are respectively temperature, light, wealth, and knowledge. The difference between the opposites is in the quantity and not in the quality of the entity. For example, it is the quantity of wealth that makes the difference between a poor and a rich person; acquisition of knowledge that differentiates between

the ignorant and the learned; the amount of light differentiates between brightness and darkness. It is this conditioned intellect, stored in us as prejudice that meets with a specific state of the self. As an example, a charged particle can be made to interact with another similar or dissimilar charged particle, but not with uncharged or neutral particle. If one is devoid of attraction or repulsion, prejudice or conditioned intellect, there is nothing to be biased about.

**Dhira or Viveki** • *Dhira* is another name for a perfect person or one of complete knowledge. *Dhiman* is the one who is in possession of such knowledge. When we say that a person is intelligent, usually we mean that person has a high intelligence quotient, IQ, but in the scriptures such a person is one having an extraordinary intellect that is gained through the power of concentration, dispassion, and discrimination, resisting all the temptations. In such a person, there is the combination of knowledge, courage, and completely disciplined emotion. The extraordinary thing about this *dhira* is that they have turned the energy of the sense organs inward into the mind. They completely turn away all their sense organs like eyes, ears, and so on, from all sense objects. Thus becoming purified, this person realises the inner Self. It is obviously not possible for a person to be absorbed in the thought of external sense objects and simultaneously realise the inner Self.

### **The Buddhist Idea of Prajna**

*Prajna* is the sixth *paramita*, perfection in the Buddhist Bodhisattva path. These *paramitas* are, three virtuous practices: *dana*, generosity, *shila*, morality, and *kshanti*, forbearance; and the remaining three are *virya*, energy or zeal, *dhyana* or meditation, and *prajna*, wisdom. The term *prajna* is composed of two Sanskrit terms: *pra*, which refers to that which is before, and

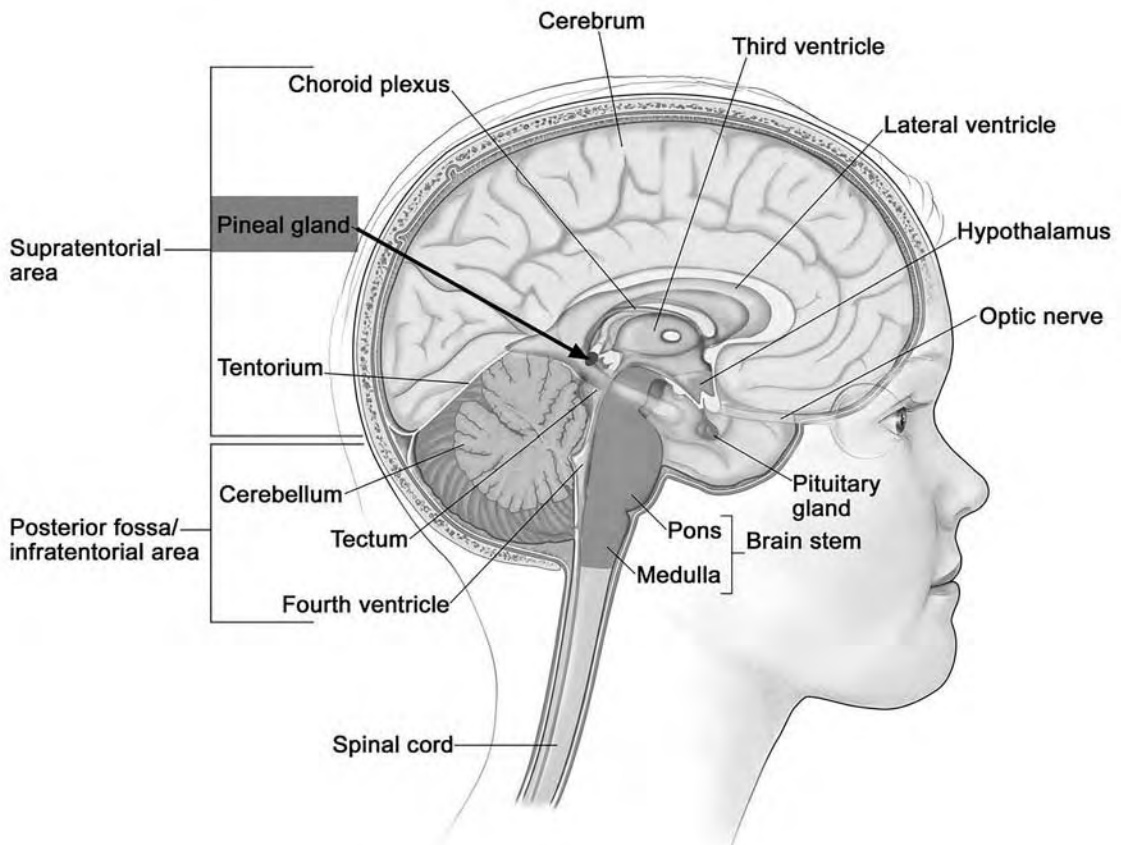


*jna*, which refers to knowledge. *Prajna* means wisdom or understanding that extinguishes afflictions and brings about enlightenment. But by *prajna*, we do not mean the simple insight that our intellect generally conceives or attributes to the term 'wisdom'. It is a kind of knowledge or understanding that is beyond the mind and the intellect. In order to understand *prajna*, we have to move beyond the realm of the intellect. There are three levels of *prajna*: the *prajna* of listening; the *prajna* of contemplating; and the *prajna* of meditation. The third stage, the *prajna* of meditation is marked by the realisation of the truth. *Prajna* of realisation helps in the development of mindfulness and awareness. *Prajna* or real wisdom, can only be attained through meditation, and therefore the

*paramitas* are prescribed in a particular order. If the mind is active, agitated, or moving, a state of equanimity cannot be perceived. The ultimate truth cannot be known by the agitated mind. When the mind becomes a perfect mirror it can then reflect the ultimate truth. In the Gita, this state of mind has been called *mukta-sanga*, free from worldly attachment.<sup>10</sup> Perfection in work would be there if the mind is devoid of any constraints like competition. This is a condition devoid of the idea of 'I' and the idea of enjoyment.

### The Brain and the States of the Mind

The human brain is the nearest working analogue of human mind. The mind is what the brain generates through its activity. But the mind



is closely linked to the brain, now recognised due to the great strides in neuroscience. Each mental function seems to have a corresponding brain action. The brain has been aptly called the seat of mind. The brain also conditions the mind. According to neuroscientists, the mind is distributed among the three entities, namely, brain, body, and environment, as the organism engages and continues to construct meaning from its surroundings. Mind is a device located not only in the brain, but also distributed in the entire body through the sense organs. Out of our ten senses, the five senses of knowledge, provide input from the environment and this information is analysed, interpreted, and stored in our mind.

Eric Kandel, the 2000 Nobel laureate in physiology or medicine said ‘mind and brain are inseparable.’<sup>11</sup> According to the Western idea of psychology, the brain and the mind are intimately connected—anatomically, functionally, and historically. The two are indissolubly linked, leading to the notion that thoughts, feelings, and all manifestations of the mind are products of the activities of neurons in the brain. Mental activity is therefore basically brain activity. Further, as we work on the mind and control its movements, the brain automatically keeps changing along with it. Each mental activity has a corresponding brain function.

Behaviour and brain changes are measured non-invasively through brain-mapping techniques to ascertain this link between the brain and the mind. With the advent of many new techniques for the study of the brain, including electroencephalography, EEG; magnetoencephalography, MEG; positron emission tomography scan, PET scan; magnetic resonance imaging, MRI; and the newest method, functional MRI, fMRI; we get static, dynamic, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional pictures of the functioning brain.

By halting our thoughts, stilling our minds, engaging in mental silence, we give ourselves mental rest; then the mind comes up with the very best of thoughts that can deliver more truths of life. It is well known that mental stimulation improves brain function and actually protects against cognitive decline. Inhibition of this stimulation causes us to look inward and to deeply ponder our actions and reactions. Such introversion is indispensable for self-realisation as it displaces our attention from the outer world to the inner. When the external world disappears, our circle of consciousness contracts because our attention is primarily focused upon our inner self. It is this inner attention that activates the pineal gland in the brain.

### ***The Third Eye: The Brain's Pineal Gland***

In many religious texts the pineal gland located in the geometric center in human brain is often called ‘the third eye’ since anatomically its interior walls are made of photoreceptor neuron cells, rods, and cones that are like those in the retina in our physical eyes. Perhaps this is why ancient civilisations and spiritual teachers have associated the pineal gland with the third or inner eye.<sup>12</sup> The French philosopher René Descartes coined this term for the organ.<sup>13</sup> The pineal gland, a small endocrine gland, lies at the very geometric center of the brain on the ventricular system. Being situated at the anatomical center of our brain, it serves as the intermediary gate bridging our physical and spiritual experiences here on earth. It produces the serotonin derivative melatonin, a hormone that affects the modulation of waking and sleep patterns and seasonal functions. Nowadays it is widely accepted that the pineal gland not only has specific functions but is a major gland that plays a significant role in the body. These functions include the production of melatonin, serotonin, and N,

N-Dimethyltryptamine or DMT, and setting the circadian rhythm or the sleep-wake cycle.

The pineal gland is able to see both physically and intuitively, unlike our regular eyes. But the human pineal gland is denied access to light directly; only the retina senses light directly. It shows enhanced release of its hormone, melatonin, during the night. These hormones are related to mood, wakefulness, and other states of awareness. The pineal gland represents the third eye. The pineal gland sits close to the sensory and emotional centers of the brain, which could explain why spiritual experiences can evoke so much emotion and sensation. The pineal gland is associated with the sixth energy center called the *ajna* chakra. Every human being's pineal gland or third eye can be activated through practice to access the spiritual world that enables one to identify with the divine and the universe. The pineal gland, once tuned into proper frequencies with the help of meditation or yoga, produces many other hormones, which support various neurological functions. The proper functioning of the pineal gland keeps people focused, happy, awake in the day, and asleep at night, and prevents neurological degeneration as people age. Dr Rick Strassman, who has dedicated years of research on the pineal gland, suggests that this gland is the factory for the powerful brain chemical called DMT, which induces a psychedelic and mystical experience.<sup>14</sup>

With every new thing we learn, every new habit we form, there is a corresponding change in the brain, a process termed neuroplasticity. Throughout one's lifetime, the brain can change its structure as well as its wiring in major ways, generating new neurons and neuronal circuitry. If a particular activity is no longer being performed, its neural path is narrowed, as it were, and weakened, as the brain is always amenable to change. Repeated habits give rise to mental

tendencies called propensities. By conscious effort we can form new habits and thus new propensities. In other words, we can build our character in a manner we choose. Neuroscientists have found two modes of functioning of the brain: logical and holistic. The former is described by neurophysiological terms while the latter is described by holistic experiences and thought processes. A typical state of mind includes both these states with different degrees of emphasis.

According to the *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali, our mind remains in one of these five states, in the ascending order of concentration: *kshipta*, disturbed; *mudha*, dull; *vikshipta*, distracted; *ekagrata*, focused; and *niruddha*, mastered. When the mind is in one of the first three states, it is identified with the *vritti*, mental impression itself. Patanjali's focus is to discipline the mind with a series of mental exercises to get rid of obstacles in order to arrive at the *ekagrata* and ultimately, the *niruddha* state. Depending upon the presence of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—the state of the mind is asserted in different ways. For example, only if the *sattvic* quality is predominant would the mind be expected to be in the inward, *niruddha* state.

The *Katha Upanishad* says that all our sense organs are habitually outgoing and would be in one of the first three states depending upon our thoughts and passions.<sup>15</sup> Due to binding attachment, we become less capable in restraining our sense organs and the mind. Only when we practise detachment, do we go beyond our limitations. Swamiji said: 'We have to seize this unstable mind and drag it from its wanderings and fix it on one idea. Over and over again this must be done. By power of will we must get hold of the mind and make it stop and reflect upon the glory of God.'<sup>16</sup> The power of mind is measured by its ability to grasp and retain, called *dhriti*. A weak



mind can neither grasp nor retain properly. It is the quality of *dhriti* that determines the lifestyle, happiness and success in life. The entire process of education throughout the world is aimed at increasing these two aspects of a learner, and psychologists are always trying to find ways of enhancing these two powers.

Mind is the sixth sense organ, although in terms of subtlety, it is higher than the physical sense organs. Further, in the *Katha Upanishad*, the order of subtlety is given as the sense objects, the sense organs, the mind, the intellect, and the Atman.<sup>17</sup>

In this series, the mental side corresponds, of course, to what is subtler and the physical side to what is gross. Mind is the controller of all the sense organs and thus is superior to the senses. Wisdom is superior still. But the supreme is the Atman. The *Amritabindu Upanishad* says that our mind works on lower and higher levels.<sup>18</sup> The impure state of the mind is the lower state that is mixed up with the sensory system and the cravings of the sensory system; the same mind, when it is freed from being in thrall to the sensory system, becomes pure, it becomes the higher mind. Swamiji says: 'The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down, down, forever—rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided will save us, free us.'<sup>19</sup> This lower mind controls our sense organs, prevents us from going to the higher mind, and leads to ultimate destruction.

The attainment of a higher state of existence is possible only by the sacrifice of the lower states. One has to give up the old possession to acquire a new possession. The spirit of renunciation must be there, but not arising due to bitterness with life. A clenched fist has first to be opened if it is to grasp anything else. We have no conviction about the truth, although we see that a river gets fresh water after mixing with the ocean. By turning away from the futile

and painful struggles for existence of ego in the transmigratory world, a rare wise aspirant can see the inner self with introverted vision. This turning away is only the first step in spiritual life though, because our normal consciousness is limited to sense-bound universe. Our essential spiritual awareness is thus covered by a thick veil of ignorance. And due to this, the mind goes out through one's senses, seeks fulfilment from the world of objects, and becomes a slave of passions. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna one has to rise from the state of 'unripe I' to 'ripe I'.<sup>20</sup>

Wisdom lies in surrendering our petty will to God's boundless will. And in the words of Sri Sarada Devi one has to get rid of all worldly desires or attachments. This ego self or 'I' consciousness is like a staircase, of which the lowest rung constitutes our ego. As soon as the ego dominates in us we start living conditioned by desire. It is through intense struggle that one can open this upward path. This struggle is the driving force behind the biological evolution for physical existence. For human beings with social, political, and economic outlooks this struggle for existence gets shifted to the mental level. The ego constantly struggles to maintain a distinct status for its identity.

### **Activation of the Third Eye**

The knowledge as the inner light is latent in all of us. But it is lost in the chaos of our worldly life. We can try to understand inner light with an analogy of laser light, which is effectively no different from ordinary light except with the special property of being extremely focused, technically termed as coherent. Likewise, the mind that perceives everything has to be freed from all worldly distractions that is being fed to it by the sense organs. In another scientific illustration, tuning into this subtle world requires a 'spiritual antenna', that is, our sixth sense needs

to be awakened. In radio physics the device used to capture invisible radio signals propagating in space is termed as an antenna. Meditation is the way to develop a spiritual antenna, though in the early stages, meditation is a struggle due to distracting thoughts. Yet another way of understanding this is as in the process of crystallisation: when the relevant solution is super-saturated with the constituent material, a tiny seed crystal acts as the outside instigator to facilitate the growth of a full crystal. Swamiji said about knowledge: 'All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind.'<sup>21</sup> The journey back to this inner world involves reversal of the current of psychical energy flowing out through the extroverted mind and senses. This requires self-control and withdrawal of the mind from sense objects by discerning the eternal from the ephemeral. It is therefore a combination of the powers of dispassion, concentration, and discrimination through meditation.

Indian scriptures prescribe the remedy for saving the mind from restlessness, assuming the basic aim of human mind is attention, focus, or concentration. The mind cannot be stabilised without controlling the senses. The mind tends to tread the path it has learned through repeated habits. Unless we consciously take a different route in a given situation, our behaviour will normally follow our propensity. Where there are many strong desires, the mind is in constant turmoil. When we learn to train our senses and master our desires, fewer and fewer of these desires arise. When the senses are trained, they will participate harmoniously in the supreme stilling of the mind.

At first, one ought not to abruptly force the

organs of action to withdraw directly from the sense world, which is more difficult than understanding one's organs of knowledge. We should transform our senses into faithful servants instead of slave-masters. Passions cannot be destroyed abruptly but can be minimised or harnessed through purification. The positive always overcomes the negative. This is the way to control. When a river, for example, has gained momentum, it is hard to stop or even to divert it. Only two types of people don't struggle: those who have completely surrendered to their senses and those who have conquered the lower mind; all others have struggles as they have inadequate knowledge of the methods and unsuccessful attempts at the control of the mind.

Without controlling the senses, it is not possible to attain the state of steadiness in wisdom. Yoga is the mental exercise for the development of the powers of the mind. In order to gain proper self-knowledge, impurities in both the body and the mind should be cleaned and this requires a course of elaborate discipline in physical, mental, moral, and intellectual culture. The turbulent senses forcibly lead astray the mind of even a person, who struggles to control it. Swamiji stressed the importance of this power of concentration: 'The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. ... The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man' (6.37).

Patanjali prescribes various techniques for the creation of such a conducive atmosphere. Some of the important ones are, removal of worldly interactions, minimising mental disturbances through the purification and control of the senses. Patanjali's extensive process of controlling the senses and the mind is called the *ashtanga-marga*, the eightfold path, a psychosomatic spiritual discipline. This eightfold discipline for the

aspirant has *yama*, restraint; *niyama*, culture; *asana*, posture; *pranayama*, breath control; *pratyahara*, withdrawal of the senses; *dharana*, fixed attention; *dhyana*, meditation; and *samādhi*, perfect concentration. The first two are ethical practices, the next two are physical practices meant for quietening the body, the third pair are mental practices for withdrawing the mind from the external world of senses and turning it inward, and finally the last pair are supra-sensory practices, bring about an unbroken and uninterrupted flow of concentration. The first five disciplines are regarded as *bahiranga-sadhana*, external practices and the last three disciplines are called *antaranga-sadhana*, internal practice. Upon successful completion of the first five steps in ethical and physical practices, the mind is cleared of both the external and internal desires and prejudices, it becomes free of the ideas of doer-ship and enjoyer-ship.

### Removal of Worldly Distractions

Just as the mind functions on conscious and unconscious levels, it can also work on a higher level called the superconscious. What appears as the conscious mind are *vruttis*, mental responses to the stimuli that we receive from the world. Empirical knowledge is possible only through the medium of *vruttis*. Experience is acquired through *vruttis*. Each *vrutti* leaves an impression called *samskara* in the mind. This makes the mind biased and prejudiced. Ripples are constantly generated on the surface of a flowing river; there are also crosscurrents under the surface. *Vruttis* are like waves or ripples on the surface of a flowing river. The impulses and desires are like crosscurrents below. Waves are created by strong winds just like *vruttis* are caused by the external stimuli that create impulses or desires arising in the depth of the mind. There are five *kleshas*: *avidya*, ignorance; *asmita*, ego;

*raga*, attraction; *dvesha*, aversion; and *abhini-vesha*, the desire to live.<sup>22</sup> Any action done with the above motives creates *samskaras* in addition to the direct result of the action and creates tendencies in one's mind.

These attachments are built in to our personality. That's why a spiritual aspirant is advised to work without any personal motive in order to get rid of *kleshas* and *samskaras*. But a worldly person having motivation to work always gets entangled with attachments and carries them forward from previous lifetimes and along the way, many more of them become ingrained in the course of daily living. As a result, the mind is full of likes and dislikes that distract our minds. And these interactions force one to return to and repeat past experiences. Our inherent strength is covered with *kleshas*. So there is a need to provide the right atmosphere for preparedness, as a farmer removes obstacles to allow water to flow into the field. A gardener cannot grow a plant or produce fruit, but can only make conditions favourable for the desired results. Children learn by themselves, the teacher only helps to facilitate this. Nature by itself will do the job on its own strength. The potentiality at the source is far more important than the helps along the way. So, our only necessary *sadhana* will be to keep obstacles away so as to make the mind prejudice free through the removal of the five *kleshas*.

Activation of the third eye, also known as *ajna* chakra, can be accomplished through meditation. Chakras are nerve centres, vast pools of energy in our bodies governing our psychic powers. The seven chakras are: *muladhara*, *manipura*, *svadhisthana*, *anahata*, *vishuddha*, *ajna*, and *sahasrara*. Mastering the art of meditation will help one to activate the *ajna* chakra through the pineal and the pituitary glands in our brain, to relax and open the mind to all its possibilities.

The energy flowing from this inner world is



intrinsically neutral, but in our lives it is manifested both positively and negatively due to in-built prejudices. How we use this inner power determines the quality of its manifestation. It is like electricity. Electricity is simply energy that can be converted to light, heat, or refrigeration. In other words, its apparent characteristics change depending upon how we channel it. The question is, how do we employ our energy? Learning to master our thoughts enables us to use our energy, our innate talent, positively, so that we consciously harness and direct this inner force.

The aim of opening the inner eye is to break the sense of limitations to open the floodgate of

neutral energy, enabling it to shape the world processes to cosmic ends. It would then allow the greatest activity with the least bondage to the demands of the personal self. For this to occur, the two physical eyes must work in harmony with the third eye. In other words, we must see not only the surface appearance, but also what lies behind it. When the third eye opens, one is no longer pulled by karma, maya, and ego; and one does not return to the former state of consciousness. Then, one acquires knowledge of what is going to happen in the future and what is going to happen to the world. The third eye is also the place for the manifestation of thoughts and desires.




SCULPTURE: A CAMBODIAN SHIVA HEAD SHOWING A THIRD EYE / VASSIL

The Mundaka Upanishad says: 'It is not comprehended through the eye, nor through speech, nor through the other senses; nor is it attained through austerity or karma.'<sup>23</sup> This wisdom cannot be achieved by physical eyes, being representative of the five sense organs; or by speech, being representative of the five organs of action; nor by any other senses, by austerity, or by any sacrificial rite. But it is only through the purity of mind gained through the clearing out of all attachments and prejudices that one can attain the illumination of *prajna*. The *Katha Upanishad* says that 'the Atman chooses to reveal itself to the one.'<sup>24</sup> It reveals itself only to the wise, the one who is prepared.

### The Glory of Detachment

For getting the best out of the world, one has to remain a detached witness, without having any material motive. Swamiji said: 'Who enjoys the picture, the seller or the seer? The seller is busy with his accounts, computing what his gain will be, how much profit he will realise on the picture. ... That man is enjoying the picture who has gone there without any intention of buying or selling. He looks at the picture and enjoys it. So this whole universe is a picture, and when these desires have vanished, men will enjoy the world.'<sup>25</sup> Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Ramprasad described the world as a mere "framework of illusion". But if one loves God's hallowed feet, then—"This very world is a mansion of mirth".'<sup>26</sup> This world is not an illusion of joy and sorrow but indeed becomes a pleasurable place through discernment and detachment. When Swamiji as Narendranath Dutta approached Sri Ramakrishna seeking a solution to his family's financial woes, he was sent to pray to the Goddess Kali, so that his distress would be alleviated. But over and again, he could only pray for knowledge,

discernment, and renunciation, the best that one can achieve in life. This should be an abject lesson for all of us on what we should truly aspire for in our lives. 

### References

1. Bertrand Russell, *The Impact of Science on Society* (New York: AMS, 1968), 98.
2. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 148.
3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), 1.28.
4. *Vishnu Purana*, 1.19.41.
5. T S Eliot, *The Rock: A Pageant Play*, Part 1.
6. See C G Jung, *Psychological Types* (London: Routledge, 2016).
7. See *Katha Upanishad*, 2.2.1.
8. See *Bhagavadgita*, 2.62-3.
9. *Gospel*, 226.
10. *Gita*, 18.26.
11. Eric R Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (New York: Norton, 2006), xii.
12. See Julie Ann Miller, 'Eye to (Third) Eye: Scientists are Taking Advantage of Unexpected Similarities between the Eye's Retina and the Brain's Pineal Gland', *Science News*, 128/19 (9 November 1985), 298-9.
13. See 'Descartes and the Pineal Gland', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pineal-gland/>> accessed 13 November 2018.
14. See Rick Strassman, *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street, 2001).
15. See *Katha Upanishad*, 2.1.1.
16. *Complete Works*, 8.47.
17. See *Katha Upanishad*, 1.3.10.
18. See *Amritabindu Upanishad*, 1.
19. *Complete Works*, 6.30.
20. *Gospel*, 269.
21. *Complete Works*, 1.28.
22. See Patanjali, *Yoga Sutras*, 2.3.
23. *Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.1.8.
24. *Katha Upanishad*, 1.2.23.
25. *Complete Works*, 6.149.
26. *Gospel*, 139.

# BALABODHA


*Ancient Wisdom Made Easy*

## Atman

THE WORD 'Atman' is a commonly used Sanskrit word. It is used by people, who do not even know Sanskrit, as it is present in almost every Indian language. The widely used meaning of the word 'Atman' is soul, albeit in a special meaning specific to Sanatana Dharma, but it is necessary to see the other meanings and the origins of this word. This is a Sanskrit word. Sanskrit is a classical language like Greek, Latin, and Persian. And in Sanskrit, as in most classical languages, most words are derived from a stem or root.

The word 'Atman' is derived from the root word *ata* by adding the suffix *manin*. The word *ata* means extraordinary, to go constantly, to obtain, walk, to blow, and to run. The word 'Atman' means breath; soul; life; self; nature; character; a person as a whole as opposed to one's parts; body; mind; understanding; the world-soul; effort; firmness; sun; fire; son; reflexive pronoun for a person in the predicate who is also the subject of the sentence; knower of the field; the primal *prakriti*, Brahman, a person having the gunas of sattva, rajas, and tamas; the supreme soul; the indwelling soul; a substance; the four-faced god Brahma; self-existent; Indra; grandfather; great grand-guru; Hiranyagarbha; the lord of all; self-revealing; the sustainer; the primal womb; daughter; creator; Prajapati; Shiva; Sarasvati; death; previous; Ishvara; intellect; conviction; consciousness; spiritual intelligence; knowledge; reflection; consideration; perception; observation; wisdom; purpose;

intent; resolve; sentience; Sanatkumara; desire; argument; decision; technical knowledge; moksha; doubt; discerning faculty; guna; debate; mental state; the sense organs; the organs of action; embryo; flesh; skin; blood; heart; nerve; bone; ribcage; knee; action; one's true nature; effort; the sun; fire; wind; living being; the natural temperament or disposition; the supreme deity and soul of the universe; spirit; the vivifying soul in opposition to the sentient; pain; care; firmness; a son; the abstract individual; the individual soul, the principle of life and sensation; essence; character; peculiarity; thinking faculty; the faculty of reason; form; image; assuming one's own form; mental quality; independent; dependent on oneself; existing; a wife's brother; a jester; and worthy of oneself.

Atman is considered to be identical with Brahman, the supreme reality, and is beyond names and forms, beyond words and speech, beyond the mind and the sense organs. It is beyond the limitations of space, time, and causation. It is immutable, undifferentiated, imperceptible, imperishable, and is different from the senses. It does not indulge in any activity and everything derives its existence because of it. It is absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss. By knowing one's true nature, the Atman, one transcends suffering. One has to annihilate all desires and kill the mind, so that the self-revealing Atman reveals itself. It is the only reality, there is no other reality, it is the non-dual reality. 



# TRADITIONAL TALES

## *No Recipients of Charity*

**Y**UDHISHTHIRA was highly compassionate towards the poor and the underprivileged. He used to give away generously in charity to those in need. Once Yudhishtira became highly proud of his qualities of charity and hospitality. As soon as the shadow of pride enveloped his mind, Sri Krishna understood it. Immediately, Sri Krishna decided to correct Yudhishtira and show him the right path by teaching him a lesson.

One day, Sri Krishna took Yudhishtira on a journey on the pretext of having to go somewhere for an important work. At that

time, King Mahabali was ruling the nether world. Mahabali used to perform charity in an unparalleled and grand manner. People across various worlds were amazed by and praised his hospitality. Sri Krishna took Yudhishtira to the nether world. Both of them were moving through the various streets of the capital of Mahabali's kingdom. At that time, Yudhishtira became thirsty and both of them went to a house in front of them. Yudhishtira requested the people in that house to give him some drinking water. The elderly woman of that house brought water in a golden vessel and gave it to



Yudhishtira. Sri Krishna was observing all this with a divine smile on his face.

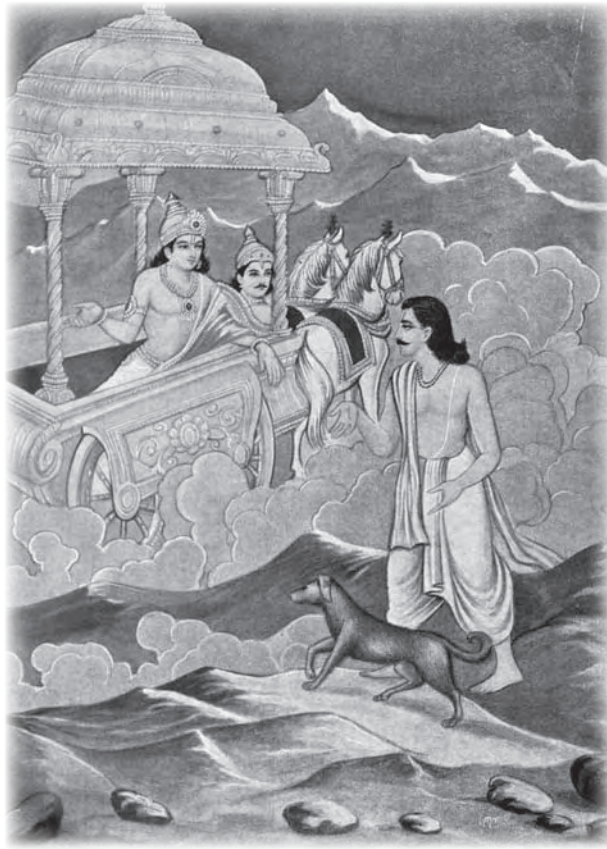
After drinking the water, Yudhishtira said to the elderly woman: 'O Mother! Thank you so much for the water. This appears to be a golden vessel. Please take this back and keep it in a safe place.' Saying this, he held out the golden vessel towards the elderly woman, who said in reply: 'Sir, in our country, we do not have the habit of taking back something that has been once given, even if it is a golden vessel. Further, we are in the habit of discarding what has been used once, even if it is made of gold, and we never use it again.' Hearing these words, Yudhishtira understood the extent of the wealth of the people of that country and their high standard of living, and was amazed at it.

From that house, Sri Krishna and Yudhishtira set forth for Mahabali's palace. In the palace, Sri Krishna introduced Yudhishtira to Mahabali:

'O King! Today I have brought Yudhishtira to your country. He is quite famous for his generosity. He feeds five hundred people daily.' As soon as Mahabali heard these words, he closed his ears with his hands and said: 'No, no! Please do not say that to me. I do not want to hear about such a person. In spite of my great efforts, I could not find even a single person to receive charity in my country. Here, there is no one in the plight of having to live on charity. There is no charity if there are no recipients. However, you say that Yudhishtira feeds five hundred people daily. That makes it certain that in his country there are five hundred poor people. This shows how "nice" his rule is! I am not interested in knowing about such a wretched person!' Hearing these words of Mahabali, Yudhishtira hung his head in shame. Thus, Sri Krishna blessed Yudhishtira by removing his pride before it could take a monstrous shape.

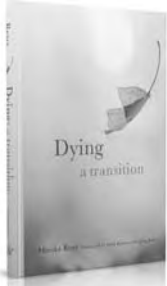
PB

*Yudhishtira with a Dog, as a Chariot from Heaven Arrives*



# REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,  
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



## ***Dying: A Transition***

Monika Renz

Trans. Mark Kyburz and

John Peck

Columbia University Press, 61 West  
62 Street, New York, NY 10023, USA.  
Website: [cup.columbia.edu](http://cup.columbia.edu). 2015. \$38.  
x + 164 pp. HB. ISBN 9780231170888.

The very thought of death brings to mind fear and the prospect of facing something unknown. The average person is seldom prepared for death. Encountering death is the worst nightmare for most, only this is the last nightmare. We have funny notions about death. We feel it is alright if a person dies at an advanced age, particularly if without any long-term illness. We call this a 'good' death. Deaths after prolonged illnesses or at a young age in tragic circumstances like accidents or suicides are considered 'bad' deaths. We associate goodness with less suffering. With the knowledge of impending death, the idea of ego gets attenuated. We take less and less interest in possessing or performing. Our sense of worldly attachments weans away. This book first came into being in the form of a paper in a journal on palliative medicine. The original book in German has been translated as the present book. Monika Renz, the author, has a rich experience of attending to terminally ill patients, and giving them counseling and spiritual guidance.

This book analyses the process of dying by dividing it into three stages: pre-transition, transition, and post-transition. I particularly like the use of the word 'transition' in the title of the book and inside the book. It is closer to the Vedantic idea of death, where the individual soul, *jivatma*, is considered to just travel from one stage to another, one body to another. Thus, death is not a complete cessation, but a transition

from one stage to another. Renz emphasises on understanding the dying person in all of one's aspects, by observing all the cues that they give—verbal, nonverbal, metaphorical, and spiritual. An urgency to transcend the baser human limitations and an equal urgency to conquer or get past all possible negative emotions is pronounced in the dying.

Renz calls dying as a change in perception. This change occurs in one's perception of ego and all ego-based needs. She also analyses the numerous near-death experiences of her patients and how they are vital in understanding the nature of the gate of death. At the outset itself, Renz clarifies that though most of her spiritual therapy was from the Christian point of view, the lessons learnt by her from those patients and presented in this book can be and should be tried on patients from different religious backgrounds, adapting them to the respective traditions. Renz gives much importance to the process of the transformation in perception towards life and death in the dying and argues that this is the singularly vital step in the process of dying and says that all other stages such as reconciliation with death and attaining maturity about death, are secondary.

Renz says that human dignity is the most important aspect of a human life and it is crucial to the care of the dying. Unless a person feels dignity while nearing death, it would become unbearable and agonising to face death. Recounting experiences of different patients, Renz tells us that many patients feel complete serenity before death and transcend pain and fear. Many other patients could experience the arrival of death and verbalised their experiences that are almost similar to mystic experiences.

Sri Ramakrishna tells how a devotee of God matures from harping on the 'I' to surrendering



to God and getting established in the conviction of 'Thou'. Renz shows how dying is a similar transformation where the primordial fear of death eventually changes to a spiritual beginning. She says that the 'I' of a dying person metamorphoses into 'Thou'. At this stage, the dying person has no fear and finds freedom and peace. Renz is a music therapist too and talks in detail about the ability of dying persons to respond to sound and music. Citing recent research and supporting it with her own findings, Renz gives us ample evidence on how music has made the process of dying a redeeming experience. She also explains how the dying lose their sense of time and relates it to the lack of the ability to orient oneself with the various rhythms of daily activities. She also proves that the dying can hear to a great extent, even when they are apparently ill. She also cites research to prove that even coma patients can hear some things that are spoken in their presence.

Renz discusses at length the various metaphors that the dying patients perceive or speak of in the pre-transition, transition, and post-transition stages of death. She also states that fear, struggle, acceptance, family processes, and maturation are the various sites of transition. In the last chapter, Renz talks about how the entire process of death is all about dying with dignity. She tells us that death is not just about becoming physically extinct. When a person knows of the approaching death, then one gradually takes leave of all pleasure-seeking activities, relationships, and other signs of attachments to this world. The biggest obstacle to letting go of life is the ego. And when a person becomes aware of impending death, one tries to consciously become less and less attached to the ego.

Renz says that it is important that palliative care or end-of-life care should be based on an indication-oriented approach, where the dying is cared for not based only on the verbalised needs of the patient, but also based on the needs that become obvious on an empathetic observation of the patient. One of the impressive achievements of Renz in this book is that she has succeeded in bringing home the importance of taking into account the spiritual, eschatological, and mystical elements involved in the process of

dying. She shows how the sense of time, space, body, divisions, and gravity become weaker, and how intensity, awareness, and the belonging to a community increase, during the process of dying. She ends the book with a poem, appendix, and notes. The concept of meaning and symbols takes a quite nuanced turn in the process of dying.

This book is filled with practical advice on how to deal with different kinds of minds at the different stages of dying. It gives us various examples of techniques and best practices that help when trying to give counselling or therapy to a terminally ill person. Though brief, this book is quite detailed in its treatment of end-of-life care.

This book is a classic example of how modern scientific care can be given to patients or the dying in conjunction with psychological and spiritual therapies that are designed in keeping with the patient's background and the life spent hitherto. Oftentimes, trying to force new beliefs on a dying person creates more trauma, thereby increasing the already building psychological pressure for coping with the process of dying. This book also reminds us of the urgent need for having a scientific and sustained research on the various near-death experiences encountered by thousands around the world. Such documentation would help in understanding these experiences in depth and also in knowing the value of such experiences in understanding life itself. Though there is some research on various eschatological models, this area also needs to be strengthened. In her poem, Renz compares death to finding one's home and pleasantly reminds one of the song that Swami Vivekananda was fond of singing: 'O mind, go to your home.'

Drawing on established psychotherapeutic models of suffering, pain, and death, Renz studies numerous patients of her own and her colleagues and friends to present us a book that pointedly and poignantly depicts the ways to provide a peaceful exit from life for the dying. This book is a brief yet detailed manual for the various people engaged in the care of the dying, physicians, nurses, therapists, counsellors, and all others who have anything to do with the dying.

*Editor*

Prabuddha Bharata

# MANANA

**Exploring thought-currents from around the world.  
Extracts from a thought-provoking book every month.**

***Our Minds, Our Selves:*  
*A Brief History of Psychology***

Keith Oatley

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. 2018. xii + 362 pp. \$29.95. HB. ISBN 9780691175089.

## ***Plato's Cave***

IT IS TEMPTING to think that what we see is real. But what if the mind doesn't work by taking is reality? What if our minds depend in part on movements of which we are not conscious? What if some of these movements are not entirely about what's out there, but come from inner processes, in a way that affects what we see and know?

To invite us to think about this, Plato asked us to imagine that we are prisoners chained to a bench in a cave where we have been since childhood. Our necks are fastened so that we can look only straight ahead. In front of us, on a wall, we see people passing back and forth. This, said Plato, is the human condition. We can't turn around to see that behind us is a large fire that is casting shadows of people onto the wall. We think the shadows are reality.

Now suppose that we are freed. We turn around and look at the fire. Now we see actual people as they walk past, and see other prisoners still shackled. Imagine being taken up a steep ascent, out of the cave and into the light. At first we are dazzled, unable to distinguish much, but then we start to see the world as it is.

*The Republic*, published nearly 2,400 years ago, in which Plato wrote about the cave, was a significant moment in the history of psychology. Are shadows in a cave what we experience of the world?



With his metaphor of the cave, Plato reached a turning point. He suggested that although, in the world, we seem to experience truth in what we see, and seem to know what we are doing, other processes are at work, Plato was suggesting that we don't know some of the most profound things about the world. They can't be seen in the ordinary way.

Plato thought that before we were born we lived on another plane, as souls in the realm of ideas. Although—as Plato thought—in our souls we once knew unchanging truths, in our embodied lives we have forgotten them. Now we see only appearances, shadows onto which we project our beliefs, which are sometimes false. Ideals can, however, be drawn out from us by insightful teachers: the word 'education' means to 'bring out' or 'lead forth'. In the history of education, the path out of the cave has come to include philosophy and mathematics, and the acquisition of skills of constructing theories and drawing inferences.

Other questions are not about the physical world but, because we humans are social beings, about our understanding of the social world. How do we know what other people are thinking and feeling? We can wonder to what extent other people are similar to us, to what extent they are different. What if we asked them what they think and feel? Might our impression of

them derive in part from what they say, and in part from passing shadows on their faces as they make emotional expressions and speak in certain tones of voice? And what about ourselves? We think we know our own thoughts and memories. But do we really know ourselves?

Plato thought the question of how one can know one's own self was even more difficult than ascending from the cave into the light of the physical world. In his time, an injunction was written at the shrine of the Oracle in Delphi: 'Know yourself.' Plato offers a thought about this in a story of how Socrates was one day walking by a river with his friend, Protagoras, discussing the myths that had been told about the beautiful place where they were. Socrates said it would take a lot of work to understand myths, and that he didn't have time for it, because, he said: 'I've not yet succeeded in obeying the Delphic injunction to "know myself".'

Alfred Whitehead wrote that Western philosophy is 'a series of footnotes to Plato'. But not everyone agrees. The innovative philosopher Karl Popper rejected some of Plato's main arguments, saying Plato was an enemy of open society. In *The Republic*, Plato's account of the ideal society, he has organized people into three classes: guardians (rulers), auxiliaries (Warriors), and artisans (producers). Only the guardians are free.

Although the form in which Plato wrote his philosophy was the dialogue—a fictional mode in which he imagines the long-dead Socrates discussing issues with acquaintances—he wants to ban writers of fiction from society entirely. Is it an oversight that he didn't point out that his idea of shadows in a cave is neither philosophy nor mathematics? It's a story based on a metaphor, the kind of story a fiction writer might offer. In chapter 17 we come to modern findings of how fiction can enable us to deepen our understandings.


How can we know other people? How can we know ourselves? The modern approach to

understanding the mind is cognitive science: understanding mind as the making of meaning. 'Cognitive' means having to do with knowledge, by making inferences, conscious and unconscious, to see, to remember, to converse, to know others and ourselves. In this quest, cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience come together with linguistics, cultural anthropology, philosophy, and other areas of research.

Not all our knowledge can be accessed consciously; some of it is unconscious. It's of three kinds, and three methods are involved in reaching it. For Plato, the methods were philosophy and education. In the next section, the means are those of psychotherapy. In the sections following that, they are of psychological research and theory.

### ***The Freudian Unconscious***

The most famous kind of unconscious is psychoanalytic, as proposed by Sigmund Freud. The method he chose now seems obvious, but before his time it was not. Then, most often, doctors would observe people who were mentally ill, see that they would often seem strange, and infer that this signified their insanity. The way Freud worked was different. He listened to what people said as they talked about themselves. He called this listening with 'evenly suspended attention'.

Freud was not the only one in his time to be thinking about the unconscious in relation to mental illness, but he was a detective of the mind who asked: Who are we? At the center of his ideas is the suggestion that we humans are not always conscious of our reasons for doing what we do. His research affected the very texture of thinking about the self. It became, as W H Auden said in a poem to commemorate Freud, 'a whole climate of opinion'. Concepts such as the unconscious, neurosis, inner conflicts, anxiety states, and psychotherapy acquired the meanings they now have largely through his influence. 



# REPORTS



*Taking Over Ceremony of the Centre at Ahmedabad*

## **New Math Centre**

**Ramakrishna Kutir, Yelagiri**, which was a retreat centre under the supervision of the headquarters, has been made a full-fledged branch centre of Ramakrishna Math. Its address is 'Ramakrishna Math, PO Athanavur, Via Jolarpet, Yelagiri Hills, Dist. Vellore, Tamil Nadu 635 853', phone: 91138 15749 and email: <yelagiri@rkmm.org>.

## **New Math Sub-Centre**

**Sri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, Ahmedabad**, has been taken over and made a sub-centre of Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot. Its address is 'Ramakrishna Math, A-202/203, Kalyan Tower, Opp. Alpha One Mall, Vas-trapur, Ahmedabad, Gujarat 380 015', phone: 079-2630 3409, email: <ahmedabad@rkmm.org> and website: <www.ramakrishnaah.org>. The sub-centre was formally inaugurated on 30 May 2018 in a programme attended by Swami Suvirananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission; Chief Minister of Gujarat Sri Vijaybhai Rupani; Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat Sri Nitinbhai Patel; other dignitaries, and about 800 devotees.

## **News of Branch Centres**

Started in Pathuriaghata, north Kolkata, immediately after the Bengal famine of 1943 as a home for the poor and orphan boys and relocated to its present site in 1967, **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur** has grown into a huge educational complex with college, schools, Blind Boys' Academy, University Faculty centre, Lokashiksha Parishad, Industrial Training Centre, Agricultural Training Centre, and Commercial Institute. The platinum jubilee of the Ashrama, the

diamond jubilee of its Vidyalaya—higher secondary school, and diamond jubilee of its Industrial Training Centre were celebrated from 26 to 29 January. Srmat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission; two Vice-presidents of the Order; Swami Suvirananda; Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal; and a number of other dignitaries took part in the various programs held in this connection. Seminars, cultural events, and a fair were also held, and a special postal cover was released to commemorate the event. In all, about 600 monastic brothers, two lakh students, alumni, teachers, and devotees attended the celebrations.

## **Celebration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sister Nivedita**

The following centres held the programmes mentioned against their names: **India: Bagda**: A convention on 24 March participated by about 250 students and teachers from different schools. **Bamunmura**: A youths' convention on 11 March attended by 346 delegates. **Gadadhar Ashrama**: Four students' conventions on 10 February, 10 and 24 March, and 7 April at four schools in Bankura district and Kolkata, attended by about 900 students in all. **Jalpaiguri**: A programme comprising lectures, music, and a drama on 20 April, attended by about 1,600 people. **Swamiji's Ancestral House**: Seven lectures at the centre and elsewhere in Kolkata between 22 March and 20 April, attended by 3,500 people in all. **Mumbai**: One hour programme particularly for college students and youth covering Sister Nivedita's life and teachings, presented through a twenty-minute audiovisual presentation along with a quiz contest, is being conducted and winners awarded

with books on Sister Nivedita. So far, around forty colleges all over Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Thane have been covered and in all, 4,000 students have participated. Book stalls were also put-up at many locations. **Outside India: Holland:** A programme comprising lectures and music on 29 April attended by a good number of devotees and well-wishers. A booklet on Sister Nivedita was also released in the programme.

### **Swachchha Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign)**

**Coimbatore Mission Vidyalaya** conducted four cleaning drives on 9, 10, 12, and 17 March in which the Vidyalaya students cleaned two public roads and the premises of a school and a government office.

**Hatamuniguda** centre held a cleanliness drive near its campus on 25 March.

**Kamarpukur** centre conducted a cleanliness drive in the village on 18 March and 29 April.


**Malda** centre held a cleanliness drive on 18 March in which 43 people cleaned a public road.

**Mangaluru** Ashrama conducted the following activities in March and April: (i) Nine cleanliness drives in Mangaluru involving about 4,000 volunteers, (ii) an awareness campaign in which 2,350 volunteers reached out to nearly 4,600 households in Mangaluru, and (iii) cleanliness drives at 137 villages in Dakshina Kannada district in which about 5,500 people took part.

On 29 March, about 400 students of the polytechnic of **Chennai Students' Home** cleaned the campus of Sri Kapaleeshwarar Temple, Chennai, after the celebration of an annual festival there.

### **Relief**

**Winter Relief:** The following centres distributed blankets and winter wear to needy people: **India: Aalo:** 272 blankets and 286 jackets from 20 April to 14 March. **Allahabad:** 500 blankets from

18 December 2017 to 10 January 2018. **Almora:** 444 blankets and 59 sweaters from 13 November to 16 February. **Aurangabad:** 2,015 jackets from 9 October to 24 March. **Bagda:** 1,053 jackets, 706 sweaters, and 571 sweatshirts from 18 October to 12 March. **Baghbazar:** 1,105 sweaters from 3 January to 15 March. **Bamunmura:** 514 sweaters and 1,044 sweatshirts from 15 February to 18 March. **Bankura:** 566 blankets from 31 October to 28 February. **Belgharia:** 1,000 blankets and 900 jackets from 1 November to 1 March. **Bhopal:** 1,103 coats, 480 jackets, 628 sweaters, and 922 sweatshirts from 20 to 24 March. **Bhubaneswar:** 100 blankets from 7 to 17 January. **Chandigarh:** 270 blankets from 18 November to 1 January. **Chandipur:** 298 blankets from 14 January to 25 February. **Contai:** 250 blankets, 288 jackets, and 286 sweaters from 23 December to 20 March. **Darjeeling:** 1,199 jackets and 6,178 sweaters from 28 May to 18 March. **Ghatshila:** 1,594 jackets/sweaters/sweatshirts from 31 December to 27 February. **Gourhati:** 160 baby blankets from 14 September to 9 March. **Hatamuniguda:** 484 sweaters from 16 to 27 March. **Ichapur:** 300 blankets and 2,035 sweaters from 27 December to 28 February. **Kankurgachhi:** 19 blankets from 5 to 25 December. **Katihar:** 200 blankets from 19 December to 27 February. **Khetri:** 262 blankets and 1,105 sweaters from 22 October to 25 March. **Lucknow:** 6,353 sweatshirts from 2 to 22 January. **Mayavati:** 1,105 coats, 2,722 jackets, 1,967 sweaters, and 267 sweatshirts from 23 December to 22 February. **Mysuru:** 801 sweaters on 27 and 30 January. **Nagpur:** 905 sweaters and 177 sweatshirts from 4 December to 7 March. **Narendrapur:** 600 blankets from 7 December to 23 February. **Narottam Nagar:** 65 jackets, 133 sweaters, and 681 sweatshirts from 18 to 30 March. **Ponnampet:** 500 sweaters and 500 sweatshirts from 27 February to 13 March. **Puri Mission:** 209 coats, 600 jackets, and 800 sweaters from 27 December to 20 February. 



# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

Volume 123 • January – December 2018

## Title Index

### B

Balabodha: <i>Adhyatma</i> ... ..	622
Balabodha: Atman ... ..	814
Balabodha: <i>Danam</i> ... ..	670
Balabodha: Deva ... ..	428
Balabodha: Guna ... ..	526
Balabodha: <i>Katha</i> ... ..	242
Balabodha: Mantra ... ..	380
Balabodha: Prana ... ..	718
Balabodha: Rishi ... ..	478
Balabodha: Samsara ... ..	574
Balabodha: Shanti ... ..	766
Balabodha: Yoga ... ..	334
Beauty in the Traditional Metaphysical Perspective— <i>Imad Jafar</i> ... ..	324

### C

Contemporary Relevance of <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> , The— <i>Pravrajika Brahmaprana</i> ... ..	149
---	-----

### D

Dawn of Religious Pluralism?— The Importance of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago, The— <i>Arpita Mitra</i> ... ..	659
--	-----

### E

'Everything is Full of Consciousness'— <i>Dr Suruchi Pande</i> ... ..	176
---	-----



Editorial—*Swami Narasimhananda*

Body Obsession, The	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	393
Candid Critical Thinking	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	297
Cloud Religion	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	729
Crowd of Fools, A	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	777
Customised Vedanta?	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	345
Is A Robot Conscious?	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	537
Learning the Mother Tongue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	441
Psychological Itch, The	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	489
Seeing the Profound in the Mundane: Studying <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Swami Vivekananda's Addresses at the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	633
Toddler's Babble, The	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	585
Ultimate Deduction, The	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	681
Education, Yoga, and Bhagavadgita— <i>A P N Pankaj</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	559
Engagements with <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> —A Survey— <i>Dr Arpita Mitra</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	204

**F**

First of January, 1886 and its Anniversary, The— <i>Swami Satyapriyananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	423
Forms of Spiritual Practice— <i>Swami Pavitrananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	508

**G**

Genius of Parable and Metaphor, The— <i>Edith Tipple</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	183
<i>Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> and Its Universal Message: The Use of Metaphor, The— <i>Swami Arupeshananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	165
<i>Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> through the Eyes of a Western Monk, The— <i>Swami Atmajnanananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	142
Grace in <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> — <i>Pravrajika Shuddhatmaprana</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	122

**H**

Her Family Remembers Sister Nivedita and Some Other Papers— <i>Sarada Sarkar</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	299
History of <i>Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita</i> , The— <i>Swami Chetanananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
How to Enjoy the World So Full of Misery— <i>Swami Satyapriyananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	465
Hubba Hubba's Riddle— <i>Patricia E West</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	316

**I**

Impact of Sri Ramakrishna's Biographies, The— <i>Ruchira Mitra</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	605
In Swami Vivekananda's Footsteps— <i>Swami Kritarthananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	450
In-depth Study of the Ancient Hindu Scriptures and <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> for Spiritual Enrichment, An— <i>Swami Satyapriyananda</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	72

**K**

Kate Tannatt Woods: The Chosen Woman of Her Century— <i>Somenath Mukherjee</i>	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	746
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**L**

Lure of Power, The—*Swami Kritarthananda* ... .. 597

**M**

Manana— ... .. 247, 339, 385, 435, 483, 531, 579, 627, 675, 723, 771, 819

Meaning of Sri Ramakrishna's Statements about

Swami Vivekananda in the Light of Scriptures, The—

*Swami Vishwarupananda* ... .. 416

Meditation on the Upanishads—

*Swami Shraddhananda* ... .. 407, 472, 516, 571, 619, 668, 713

Moral Point of View of Sri Ramakrishna, The—*Dr Rajkumar Modak* ... .. 690

**N**

Non-Attachment, True and False—*Swami Pavitrananda* ... .. 395

Nouns and Adjectives: Advaita Through the Logic of Grammar—*Bharatwaj Iyer* ... 553

**R**

Ramakrishna in Kannada Literature: A Bird's Eye View, Sri—*Swami Vireshananda* 491

Ramakrishna Movement in Goa, The—*Swami Muktidananda* ... .. 403

*Ramakrishna Vachanaveda*: A Nonpareil Gem, Sri—*Swami Atmajnananda* ... .. 156

Ramakrishna, Christ, and the Paradox of Grace—*Steven F Walker* ... .. 191

Ramakrishna's Message to Humanity, Sri—*Gopal Stavig* ... .. 222

Ramakrishna's Sadhana: A Perennial *Pushpaka Vimana*, Sri—

*Prof. M Sivaramkrishna* ... .. 230

*Ramakrishnarin Amuda Mozhigal*—*Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* in Tamil, Sri—

*Swami Asutoshananda* ... .. 138

Religious Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Narayana Guru—

*Betty Sunny* ... .. 328

Reminiscences of Some Direct Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna—

*Swami Siddheswarananda*, *Trans. Yogeshananda Swami* ... .. 683

Reports ... .. 249, 341, 387, 437, 485, 533, 581, 629, 677, 725, 773, 821

Re-reading of Swami Vivekananda's Paper on Hinduism, A—

*Swami Vanishananda* ... .. 731

Reviews ... .. 245, 337, 383, 431, 481, 529, 577, 625, 673, 721, 769, 817

**S**

Saint, Saviour, and Common Man—*Swami Pavitrananda* ... .. 443

Significance of the Spiritual Experiences Revealed in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*—

*Swami Muktidananda* ... .. 132

Sister Nivedita: A Saga of Dedication and Sacrifice—*Swami Suvirananda* ... .. 779

*Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*: Telugu Edition—

*I S Madugula and Emany Sudha* ... .. 197

**T**

This Month ... ..	296, 344, 392, 440, 488, 536, 584, 632, 680, 728, 776
Thou Art Never Alone— <i>Swami Pavitrananda</i> ... ..	564
Traditional Tales: Eight Days ... ..	381
Traditional Tales: Glory of the Gift of Food, The ... ..	671, 719
Traditional Tales: Holy Name of God, The ... ..	767
Traditional Tales: Miracle That Brought Faith, The ... ..	429, 479, 527, 575, 623
Traditional Tales: No Recipients of Charity ... ..	815
Traditional Tales: Plight of the Sins that are Washed in Ganga, The ... ..	335
Traditional Tales: Sri Rama That Jambavan Saw, The ... ..	243
Traditional Wisdom:	
<i>Maitrayaniya Upanishad</i> ... ..	1, 295, 343, 391, 439, 487, 535, 583, 631, 679, 727, 775
Truth Swami Vivekananda Taught the US at Detroit—	
Lasting Significance of His Teachings—	
<i>Dr Sukanya Ray and Dr Anil Baran Ray</i> ... ..	587

**U**

Understanding Mysticism through Quantum Physics— <i>Gopal C Bhar</i> ... ..	347
Unsupported Eremitical Contemplative Asceticism— <i>Eric S Fallick</i> ... ..	742

**V**

<i>Vachanamritam</i> : The Book that Transformed Kerala's Spiritual Realm—	
<i>Swami Nandatmajananda</i> ... ..	171
Vedantic Socialism: Cosmopolitan Reflections of Swami Vivekananda—	
<i>Ambili S</i> ... ..	761
Vivekananda and Others on the Impact of <i>Nirguna</i> Brahman	
on the Phenomenal World, Swami— <i>Gopal Stavig</i> ... ..	366
Vivekananda and Paul Carus: A Rewarding Retrospection, Swami—	
<i>Somenath Mukherjee</i> ... ..	539
Vivekananda and the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893, Swami—	
New Perspectives— <i>Swami Narasimhananda</i> ... ..	653, 698
Vivekananda: Breaking Big in Chicago and Some New Discoveries, Swami—	
<i>Diane Marshall</i> ... ..	635
Vivekananda's Chicago Addresses—An Analysis for the Present Time, Swami—	
<i>Swami Satyapriyananda</i> ... ..	646

**W**

What is Realisation?— <i>Swami Pavitrananda</i> ... ..	613
What Makes the Gospel Unique?— <i>Pravrajika Virajaprana</i> ... ..	127
William Ernest Hocking: A Turnaround Experience— <i>Somenath Mukherjee</i> ... ..	791
Wisdom or Eye of Knowledge— <i>Gopal Chandra Bhar</i> ... ..	799

## **Author Index**

### **A**

- Arupeshananda, Swami*  
*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and Its Universal Message: The Use of Metaphor, The ...* 165
- Asutoshananda, Swami*  
*Ramakrishnarin Amuda Mozhigal—*  
*Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita in Tamil, Sri ... ..* 138
- Atmajnanananda, Swami*  
*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna through the Eyes of a Western Monk, The ... ..* 142
- Atmajnanananda, Swami*  
*Ramakrishna Vachanaveda: A Nonpareil Gem, Sri ... ..* 156

### **B**

- Bhar, Gopal Chandra*  
 Understanding Mysticism through Quantum Physics ... .. 347  
 Wisdom or Eye of Knowledge ... .. 799
- Brahmaprana, Pravrajika*  
 Contemporary Relevance of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, The ... .. 149

### **C**

- Chetanananda, Swami*  
 History of *Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, The ... .. 33

### **E**

- Emany, Sudha and Madugula, I S*  
*Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita: Telugu Edition...* ... .. 197

### **F**

- Fallick, Eric S*  
 Unsupported Eremitical Contemplative Asceticism ... .. 742

### **I**

- Iyer, Bharatwaj*  
 Nouns and Adjectives: Advaita Through the Logic of Grammar ... .. 553

### **J**

- Jafar, Imad*  
 Beauty in the Traditional Metaphysical Perspective ... .. 324



**K***Kritarthananda, Swami*

In Swami Vivekananda's Footsteps ... ..	450
Lure of Power, The ... ..	597

**M***Madugula, I S and Emany, Sudha*

<i>Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita</i> : Telugu Edition... ..	197
--	-----

*Marshall, Diane*

Vivekananda: Breaking Big in Chicago and Some New Discoveries, Swami ... ..	635
---	-----

*Mitra, Arpita*

Dawn of Religious Pluralism?—	
The Importance of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago, The ... ..	659
Engagements with The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna—A Survey ... ..	204

*Mitra, Ruchira*

Impact of Sri Ramakrishna's Biographies, The ... ..	605
---	-----

*Modak, Dr Rajkumar*

Moral Point of View of Sri Ramakrishna, The ... ..	690
--	-----

*Mukherjee, Somenath*

Kate Tannatt Woods: The Chosen Woman of Her Century ... ..	746
Vivekananda and Paul Carus: A Rewarding Retrospection, Swami ... ..	539
William Ernest Hocking: A Turnaround Experience ... ..	791

*Muktidananda, Swami*

Ramakrishna Movement in Goa, The ... ..	403
Significance of the Spiritual Experiences Revealed in	
<i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> ... ..	132

**N***Nandatmajananda, Swami*

<i>Vachanamritam</i> : The Book that Transformed Kerala's Spiritual Realm ... ..	171
--	-----

*Narasimhananda, Swami*

Body Obsession, The ... ..	393
Candid Critical Thinking... ..	297
Cloud Religion ... ..	729
Crowd of Fools, A ... ..	777
Customised Vedanta? ... ..	345
Is A Robot Conscious? ... ..	537
Learning the Mother Tongue... ..	441
Psychological Itch, The ... ..	489
Seeing the Profound in the Mundane: Studying The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna ... ..	3

Toddler's Babble, The ... ..	585
Ultimate Deduction, The ... ..	681
Vivekananda's Addresses at the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893, Swami ...	633
Vivekananda and the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893— New Perspectives, Swami... ..	653, 698

## P

### *Pande, Dr Suruchi*

'Everything is Full of Consciousness' ... ..	176
--	-----

### *Pankaj, A P N*

Education, Yoga, and Bhagavadgita ... ..	559
--	-----

### *Pavitrananda, Swami*

Forms of Spiritual Practice ... ..	508
Non-Attachment, True and False... ..	395
Saint, Saviour, and Common Man ... ..	443
Thou Art Never Alone ... ..	564
What is Realisation? ... ..	613

## R

### *Ray, Dr Sukanya and Ray, Dr Anil Baran*

Truth Swami Vivekananda Taught the US at Detroit— Lasting Significance of His Teachings ... ..	587
---	-----

## S

### *S, Ambili*

Vedantic Socialism: Cosmopolitan Reflections of Swami Vivekananda ... ..	761
--	-----

### *Sarkar, Sarada*

Her Family Remembers Sister Nivedita and Some Other Papers ... ..	299
---	-----

### *Satyapriyananda, Swami*

First of January, 1886 and its Anniversary, The ... ..	423
How to Enjoy the World So Full of Misery ... ..	465
In-depth Study of the Ancient Hindu Scriptures and <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> for Spiritual Enrichment, An ... ..	72
Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Addresses— An Analysis for the Present Time ... ..	646

### *Shraddhananda, Swami*

Meditation on the Upanishads ... ..	407, 472, 516, 571, 619, 668, 713
-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

### *Shuddhatmaprana, Pravrajika*

Grace in <i>The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna</i> ... ..	122
--	-----

### *Siddheswarananda, Swami, Trans. Yogeshananda, Swami*

Reminiscences of Some Direct Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna ... ..	683
--	-----

*Sivaramkrishna, Prof. M*

Ramakrishna's Sadhana: A Perennial *Pushpaka Vimana*, Sri ... .. 230

*Stavig, Gopal*

Ramakrishna's Message to Humanity, Sri ... .. 222

Vivekananda and Others on the Impact of *Nirguna* Brahman  
on the Phenomenal World, Swami ... .. 366

*Sunny, Betty*

Religious Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Narayana Guru ... .. 328

*Suvirananda, Swami*

Sister Nivedita: A Saga of Dedication and Sacrifice ... .. 779

**T***Tipple, Edith*

Genius of Parable and Metaphor, The ... .. 183

**V***Vanishananda, Swami*

Re-reading of Swami Vivekananda's Paper on Hinduism, A ... .. 731

*Virajaprana, Pravrajika*

What Makes the Gospel Unique?... .. 127

*Vireshananda, Swami*

Ramakrishna in Kannada Literature: A Bird's Eye View, Sri ... .. 491

*Vishwarupananda, Swami*

Meaning of Sri Ramakrishna's Statements about  
Swami Vivekananda in the Light of Scriptures, The ... .. 416

**W***Walker, Steven F*

Ramakrishna, Christ, and the Paradox of Grace ... .. 191

*West, Patricia E*

Hubba Hubba's Riddle ... .. 316

**Book Reviews**

Amazing Secrets of *The Bhagavad Gita*—Ed *Viswanathan* ... .. 432

Cambridge Companion to *The Waste Land*, The—Ed. *Gabrielle McIntire* ... .. 481

Dying: A Transition—*Monika Renz*, Trans. *Mark Kyburz and John Peck* ... .. 817

Enemies of Excellence: 7 Reasons Why We Sabotage Success, The— <i>Greg Saliccioli...</i>	721
Future Christ: A Lesson in Heresy— <i>François Laruelle, Trans. Anthony Paul Smith ...</i>	577
Heartfulness Way: Heart-Based Meditations for Spiritual Transformation, The— <i>Kamlesh D Patel and Joshua Pollock ... ..</i>	769
Immortal Tales, The— <i>A D Bhattacharya ... ..</i>	337
Inspiration of Paradise Lost, The— <i>Amal Kiran (K D Sethna) ... ..</i>	482
Light to the West: The Life and Teachings of Swami Prabhavananda, A— <i>Pravrajika Anandaprana, Ed. Pravrajika Brahmaprana ... ..</i>	431
Lily of the Field and The Bird of the Air: Three Godly Discourses, The— <i>Søren Kierkegaard, Trans. Bruce H Kirmmse ... ..</i>	529
Musings On Hinduism— <i>Nithin Sridhar... ..</i>	245
Quitting— <i>Peg Streep and Alan Bernstein ... ..</i>	433
Saradananda, 'The Great One' Unfolds Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga, Swami— <i>Vijay Kaskhedikar ... ..</i>	337
Sweet— <i>Nileen Putatunda ... ..</i>	246
Triumph of Religion Preceded by Discourse to Catholics, The— <i>Jacques Lacan, Trans. Bruce Fink ... ..</i>	673
Usefulness of Useless Knowledge, The— <i>Abraham Flexner With A Companion Essay by Robbert Dijkgraaf ... ..</i>	434
Vivekananda and Others— <i>Tapash Sankar Dutta ... ..</i>	383
Vivekananda on Indian Reconstruction: In the light of Nationalistic, Social and Spiritual Aspects, Swami— <i>Dr N Lekshmikutty ... ..</i>	383
What Kind of Creatures Are We?— <i>Noam Chomsky ... ..</i>	625
Why Philosophize?— <i>Jean-François Lyotard, Trans. Andrew Brown ... ..</i>	530

## **List of Reviewers**

Chattopadhyay, Subhasis ... ..	482
Debnath Papiya ... ..	383
Hariharan, N ... ..	337, 338, 384
Prabuddha Bharata, Editor ... ..	246, 530, 578, 626, 674, 722, 770, 818
Saroj, R S ... ..	246, 432, 433
Sinha Arundhati ... ..	434



## **Manana: Book Extracts**

Big Mind: How Collective Intelligence Can Change Our World—Geoff Mulgan	...	675
Bit By Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age—Matthew J Salganik...	...	723
Case Against Education:		
Why the Education System Is a Waste of Time and Money, The—		
Bryan Caplan...	...	483
Conversational Firm:		
Rethinking Bureaucracy in the Age of Social Media, The—Catherine J Turco	...	579
Dying: A Transition—		
Monika Renz, Trans. Mark Kyburz and John Peck	...	771
Evolutionary Leap:		
Colin Wilson On Psychology, An—Colin Stanley	...	339
Midlife: A Philosophical Guide—Kieran Setiya	...	627
Our Minds, Our Selves:		
A Brief History of Psychology—Keith Oatley	...	819
Reputation: What It Is And Why It Matters—Gloria Origgi	...	531
Survival Guide To The Misinformation Age, A—David J Helfand	...	435
World Without Why, A—Raymond Geuss	...	385
Yoga In Practice—Ed. David Gordon White	...	247

**Managing Editor:** Swami Muktidananda

**Editor:** Swami Narasimhananda

# An Appeal

Dear Devotees & Well-wishers,

We all know that **Tirtharaj Prayag (Allahabad)** is a place for versatility of religions and spirituality. Not only different sects of the Hindu Dharma, but also people of all religion and faith come to Prayag to feel the gigantic vibrations penetrating the very spiritual atmosphere of Tirtharaj Prayag. One can see confluence of religions during the time of **Kumbha Mela**, which is a sort of a mini **India**. By the grace of spiritual teachers from time immemorial, pious devotees come to **Kumbha Mela** to take dip in the Triveni Sangam— and be sanctified. The upcoming **Kumbha Mela** is scheduled from 14 January to 19 February 2019. **Per Government estimates, more than 15 crore sadhus, devotees and pilgrims will take bath in the holy water during the Mela.**



**Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad, will take this opportunity to extend its helping hand of service among more than five lakh Sadhus, Devotees and Pilgrims from the remotest corners of the country.** This will be a unique opportunity for us to spread the message of the Holy Trio among devotees — and receive blessings by fulfilling the dream of Swamiji: "**Service to Man is Service to God.**" With the blessings of the Most Revered **Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj** (the founder of Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad in the year 1910), we are planning to organise a camp in the bank of Triveni Sangam.

During the Mela days, the following facilities will be provided to devotees/pilgrims:

- ❖ Prayer cum lecture hall
- ❖ Round-the-clock free charitable dispensary with emergency facilities
- ❖ Book stall
- ❖ Photo gallery of the Holy Trio
- ❖ Boarding/lodging facilities for Sadhus, devotees and pilgrims.

**The expected cost of this Kumbha Mela Camp is calculated at approx. Rs 1,50,00,000 (Rupees one crore and fifty lakh only).** To meet such high expense we request to you and other generous devotees to contribute and help us in our good work — as well as be a member in the **SevaYajna** started by **Swami Vivekananda** himself.

**Your kind donation will be gladly accepted and acknowledged which may be either A/C payee Cheque / Draft in favour of 'Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama— Allahabad' or by Bank Transfer (NEFT/RTGS) on State Bank of India, Allahabad, A/C no: 10210448619, IFSC: SBIN0002584 . All the donations are exempt from Income Tax under Section 80G(5)(vi) of Income tax Act, 1961. Please send your Pan No: along with your Donation. Our PAN No is AAAARIO77P.**

Hope all of you will grab this unique opportunity by helping us to make our Mission successful.



**Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama**  
Vijnanananda Marg, Mutthiganj, Allahabad -211 003  
Phone : (0532) 2413369, Mob: 9453630406  
E-mail : rkmsald@gmail.com; allahabad@rkmm.org

Swami Akshayananda  
Secretary



## TOWARDS A BRIGHTER TOMORROW



₹ Finance



Healthcare



Hospitality



Housing

### The Peerless General Finance & Investment Company Limited

- Peerless Financial Products Distribution Ltd.
- Peerless Financial Services Ltd.
- Peerless Funds Management Co. Ltd.
- Peerless Trust Management Co. Ltd.
- Peerless Securities Ltd.
- Peerless Hospital & B K Roy Research Centre
- Peerless Hotels Ltd.
- Bengal Peerless Housing Development Co. Ltd.  
(a joint venture with West Bengal Housing Board)



**Peerless**  
Smart Financial Solutions



Subsidiaries of The Peerless General Finance & Investment Company Limited



Peerless Hotels Ltd.



Subsidiaries of The Peerless General Finance & Investment Company Limited

### The Peerless General Finance & Investment Company Limited

Peerless Bhawan, 3 Esplanade East,  
Kolkata 700 069

Ph: 033 2248 3001, 2248 3247

Fax: 033 2248 5197

Website: [www.peerless.co.in](http://www.peerless.co.in)

E-mail: [feedback@peerless.co.in](mailto:feedback@peerless.co.in)

CIN: U66010WB1932PLC007490



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA SHARANAM

*Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya*



## ELECON POWER INFRASTRUCTURE PVT. LTD.

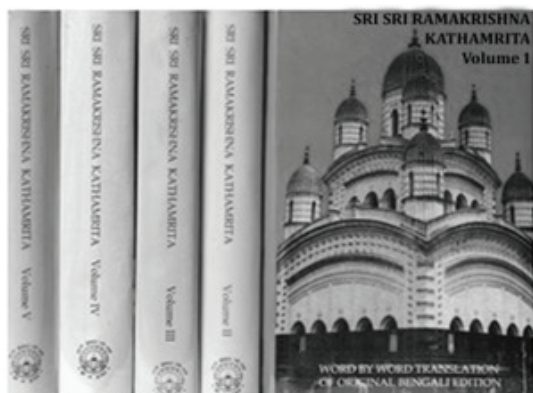
- Electrical & Fire monitoring system engineers.
- Consultant and Government licenced Engineers
- Engaged in the electrification of National Capital Region (Delhi Under BSES Rajdhani and Yamuna Power Ltd & Greater Noida under Noida Power Company Ltd)

Registered Office:  
4/2A Siraj Ud Daullah Sarani  
Kolkata 700 069  
Ph: 033-40048573/ 9331203852

Corporate Branch:  
85 A Kilokri (Top Floor)  
New Delhi 110 014  
Ph: 09312343592







## VOLUMES I to V Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita in English

### HINDI SECTION

- ❑ **Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita Vol. I to V** Rs. 500 per set (plus postage Rs. 100)  
M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta), a son of the Lord and disciple, elaborated his diaries in five parts of 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita' in Bengali that were first published by Kathamrita Bhawan, Calcutta in the years 1902, 1905, 1908, 1910 and 1932 respectively. This series is a verbatim translation in Hindi of the same.
- ❑ **Sri Ma Darshan Vol. I to XVI** Rs. 900 per set (plus postage Rs. 150)  
In this series of sixteen volumes Swami Nityatmananda brings the reader in close touch with the life and teachings of the Ramakrishna family: Thakur, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, M., Swami Shivananda, Swami Abhedananda and others. The series brings forth elucidation of the Upanishads, the Gita, the Bible, the Holy Quran and other scriptures, by M., in accordance with Sri Ramakrishna's line of thought. This work is a commentary on the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna by Gospel's author himself.

### ENGLISH SECTION

- ❑ **Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita Vol. I to V** Rs. 750 per set (plus postage Rs.150)
- ❑ **M., the Apostle & the Evangelist Vol. I to XIII, Rs.1550 per set (plus postage Rs.150)**  
(English version of Sri Ma Darshan) **and XV**
- ❑ **Life of M. & Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita** Rs. 150 (plus postage Rs. 50)
- ❑ **A Short Life of M.** Rs 50 (plus postage Rs.40)

### BENGALI SECTION

- ❑ **Sri Ma Darshan Vol. I to XVI** Rs. 1440 per set (plus postage Rs. 150)

*All enquiries and payments should be made to:*



#### SRI MA TRUST

579, Sector 18-B, Chandigarh - 160 018 India

Phone: 91-172-272 44 60, +91-8427-999-572

Email: [SriMaTrust@yahoo.com](mailto:SriMaTrust@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.kathamrita.org](http://www.kathamrita.org)

*We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran.*

*Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.*

*Swami Vivekananda*

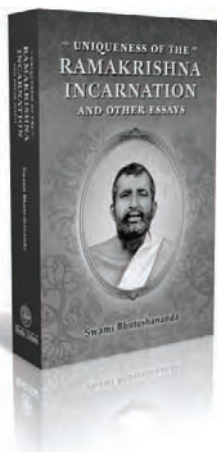
ABP



## UNIQUENESS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA INCARNATION AND OTHER ESSAYS

Swami Bhuteshananda

New Release



Revered Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, the twelfth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, was loved and revered by monks and devotees alike for his profound learning, untiring energy, loving heart, and, above all, his spiritual accomplishments.

During the long tenure of his spiritual ministry, Revered Maharaj delivered discourses at various places both in India and abroad in response to the earnest requests of spiritual seekers. This book is a compilation of forty-one of these discourses.

Monks and devotees would meet Swami Bhuteshanandaji nearly every day during his tenure as President of the Ramakrishna Order and ask him various questions on spiritual life. Selected questions and Maharaj's answers to them have been given at the end of the book.

Pages: 520 | Price: ₹ 300  
Packing & Postage: ₹ 72



Please write to:

ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India

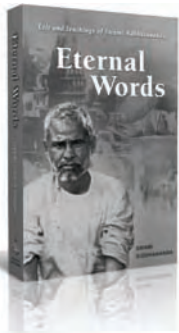
Phones: 91-33-22840210 / 22890898 / 22866483, Email: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)

## ***Eternal Words : Life and Teachings of Swami Adbhutananda***

*New Releases*

**Swami Siddhananda**

**Translated by Swami Sarvadevananda**



Pages: 316 | Price: ₹ 100  
Packing & Postage: ₹ 50

In order to understand the transformative power of an incarnation, it is essential to read and learn about the lives of their inner companions. Although Swami Adbhutananda, also known as Latu Maharaj, was a direct disciple of Thakur, unfortunately very little is known about his early life except that he was born in a poor family and basically illiterate. However, by his Guru's grace and own self-effort, Latu Maharaj became a Knower of Brahman.

These conversations, transcribed by Swami Siddhananda, reveal the essence of spiritual life for sincere spiritual practitioners of all denominations. Entitled *Satkatha*, these were originally published serially in the Bengali monthly magazine *Udbodhan* during Latu Maharaj's lifetime. In 1964, these articles were compiled and published into a Bengali book with the same title.

Swami Sarvadevananda, the Minister-in-Charge of the Southern California Vedanta Society, has taken great pains to translate *Satkatha* from Bengali into English. We hope that this book will inspire readers to practice Sri Ramakrishna's and Latu Maharaj's teachings in their daily lives.

## ***Sister Nivedita : The Fighter Extraordinary for India***

**by Sukanya Ray & Anil Baran Ray**



Pages: 152 | Price: ₹ 70  
Packing & Postage: ₹ 50

The present book is comprised of articles written by the authors, which have already been published in *Prabuddha Bharata*, the monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. The articles have been slightly modified. Every sentence of this work exudes utmost reverence and admiration for the Irish-born disciple of Swami Vivekananda who gave her "EVERYTHING" for the cause of India.

Looking at Nivedita's life of unconditional self-sacrifice for India and her dharmic culture, she was one of God's chosen instruments whose lives have only one purpose—to be sacrificed at the altar of the Divine. As such, her primary concern was for the uplift of Indian women through an indigenous system of education, combining the spiritual and cultural heritage of India with modern western science.

Nivedita's life and works are legendary. At the same time, we have to sadly admit that her life, character, and contributions are still unknown to the world, even to the present-generation of Indians. We hope that this book will, to some extent, carry to the world the life and message of the great Sister.



Please write to: **ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India**  
Order on-line: <https://shop.advaitaashrama.org>  
Phones: 91-33-22890898 / 22866483, Email: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)



The best guide in life is strength.  
In religion, as in all other matters,  
discard everything that weakens  
you, have nothing to do with it.

—Swami Vivekananda

With Best Compliments From:



**SVIS LABS**

**PRIVATE LIMITED**

(Manufacturers of Active Pharmaceutical  
Ingredients and Intermediates)

Swami Vivekananda's statue  
at Museum, RKM New Delhi

Regd. Off. & Fact. : Plot No.88 & 89, Phase - II,  
Sipcot Industrial Complex, Ranipet - 632 403, Tamil Nadu.  
Phone : 04172 - 244820, 651507, Tele Fax : 04172 - 244820  
E-mail : rao@svisslabss.net Web Site : www.svisslabss.net

**Managing Editor:** Swami Muktidananda. **Editor:** Swami Narasimhananda. **Printed by:** Swami Vibhatmananda at Gipidi Box Co., 3B Chatu Babu Lane, Kolkata 700 014 and published by him for Advaita Ashrama (Mayavati) from Advaita Ashrama, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, on 1 December 2018.

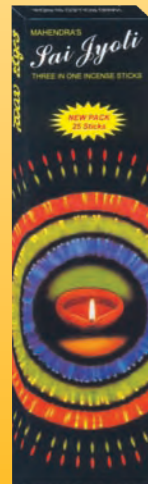




*With our humble pranaams  
at the Lotus Feet of  
Shree Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

Divine Fragrances®  
From the House of  
Mahendra's

50  
Fragrant Years  
1961-2011



2015



**MAHENDRA PERFUMERY WORKS**

Raghavendra Colony, #72/2, 5th Main, Chamarajpet, Bangalore - 560 018. INDIA.

Ph. : +91-(0)80-26602089, 26603729, Fax: +91-(0)80-26676398.

E mail: mahendraperfumery@gmail.com, Website : www.mahendraperfumery.com

If undelivered, return to: ADVAITA ASHRAMA, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700 014, India